

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Program Announcement No. CB-2001-01**

Announcement of the Availability of Financial Assistance and Request for Applications to Support Adoption Opportunities Demonstration Projects, Child Abuse and Neglect Discretionary Activities, Abandoned Infants Assistance awards, and projects to build the analytical capacity of State child welfare programs.

Agency: Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Action: Announcement of availability of financial assistance and request for applications to support projects under the Adoption Opportunities Program, title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978, as amended, [42 USC 5111]; Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program, Section 430 in Title IV-B, Subpart 2, of the Social Security Act, as amended, [42 USC 629]; Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) as amended, [42 USC 5101 et seq.]; Section 101 of the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, as amended [42 USC 670 note]

Summary: The Children's Bureau (CB) within the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announces the availability of fiscal year (FY) 2001 funds for competing new Adoption Opportunities Program, Child Abuse and Neglect Discretionary Activities, Abandoned Infants Assistance, and projects to build the analytical capacity of State child welfare programs. Funds from the Adoption Opportunities Program are designed to provide support for demonstration projects that facilitate the elimination of barriers to adoption and provide permanent loving homes for children who would benefit from adoption, particularly children with special needs. Discretionary funds from the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program support research, training and technical assistance and evaluation efforts to preserve families. Funds from the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act support knowledge-building research and service demonstration projects designed to assist and enhance national, State and community efforts to prevent, assess, identify and treat child abuse and neglect. Funds from section 101 of the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, as amended [42 USC 670 note] are to establish a program of comprehensive service demonstration projects to prevent the abandonment in hospitals of infants and young children, particularly those exposed to a dangerous drug and those with the human immunodeficiency virus or who have been perinatally exposed to the virus.

Closing Time and Date: The closing time and date for **RECEIPT** of applications is 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Time Zone) on June 15, 2001.

Mailed or hand-carried applications received after 4:30 p.m. on the closing date will be classified as late and not considered in the current competition.

Deadline : Mailed applications shall be considered as meeting an announced deadline if they are received on or before the deadline time and date at:

Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF)
Operations Center
1815 N. Fort Myer Drive, Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22209

The hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Time).

The phone number of the Operations Center is 1-800-351-2293.

Applicants are responsible for mailing applications well in advance to ensure that the applications are received on or before the deadline time and date. Applicants are cautioned that express/overnight mail services do not always deliver as agreed.

Applications hand-carried by applicants, applicant couriers, other representatives of the applicant, or by overnight/express mail couriers shall be considered as meeting an announced deadline if they are received on or before the closing time and date.

ACF cannot accommodate transmission of applications by fax or through other electronic media. Therefore, applications transmitted to ACF electronically will not be accepted regardless of date or time of submission and time of receipt.

Late applications : Applications that do not meet the above criteria are considered late applications. ACF shall notify each late applicant that its application will not be considered in the current competition.

Extension of deadlines: ACF may extend application deadlines when circumstances such as acts of God (e.g., floods or hurricanes) occur, or when there are widespread disruptions of mail service. Determinations to extend or waive deadline requirements rest with the Chief Grants Management Officer.

For Further Information Contact: The ACYF Operations Center is available to answer questions regarding application requirements and to refer you to the appropriate contact person in ACYF for programmatic questions. The telephone number is 1-800-351-2293 or you may contact them by e-mail at cb@lcnnet.com

Supplementary Information: This program announcement consists of four parts. Part I provides information on the Administration on Children, Youth and Families and Children's Bureau's statutory authority and available funds for the programs covered in this announcement. Part II lists the programmatic priorities for which applications are being requested and provides general information. Part III provides information on the application, review, and funding process. The forms and general guidance to be used for submitting an application follow in Part IV. Please copy the forms as single-sided forms and use them in submitting an application under this announcement. No additional application materials are available or needed to submit an application.

This announcement package is also available online at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb> under Policy and Funding Announcements, on the Children's Bureau web site. The required Federal forms are available online at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofs/grants/form.htm>

Applicants should note that grants to be awarded under this program announcement are subject to the availability of funds.

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PART I. Background

A. General Information on the Administration on Children, Youth and Families and the Children's Bureau

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) administers national programs for children and youth, works with States and local communities to develop services which support and strengthen family life, seeks joint ventures with the private sector to enhance the lives of children and their families, and provides information and other assistance to parents. The concerns of ACYF extend to all children from birth through adolescence. Many of the programs administered by the agency focus on children from low-income families; abused and neglected children; children and youth in need of foster care, independent living, adoption or other child welfare services; preschool children; children with disabilities; runaway and homeless youth; and children from Native American and migrant families.

Within ACYF, the Children's Bureau plans, manages, coordinates, and supports child abuse and neglect prevention and child welfare services programs. It administers the Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program, the Child Welfare Services State Grants Program, Child Welfare Services Training Programs, the Independent Living Program, the Adoption Opportunities Program, the Abandoned Infants Assistance Program, programs supported by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act, the Court Improvement Program, programs funded under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), including Basic State grants, the child abuse and neglect discretionary program, the Community-Based Family Resource and Support Program, and the Children's Justice Act Program.

The Children's Bureau programs are designed to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of all children, including those in foster care, available for adoption, recently adopted, abused, neglected, dependent, disabled, or homeless children and to prevent neglect, abuse, and exploitation of children. The programs also encourage strengthening the family unit to help prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families and reunifying families, where possible, when separation has occurred.

The Children's Bureau provides leadership and conducts activities designed to assist and enhance national, State, and community efforts to prevent, assess, identify, and treat child abuse and neglect. These activities include research, demonstration programs, and grants to States for: developing comprehensive child-centered and family-focused child protective services systems; providing training and technical assistance to develop the necessary resources to implement successful comprehensive child and family protection strategies; providing for mutual support and parent self-help programs; gathering, processing, and housing high-quality data sets through a National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect; and gathering, storing, and disseminating child maltreatment information through a National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and a National Adoption Information Clearinghouse. The Child Welfare Training program and the Abandoned Infants Assistance program are also managed in the Children's Bureau and are described later in this announcement.

State child welfare systems are designed to protect children who have suffered maltreatment, who are at risk for maltreatment, or who are under the care and placement responsibility of the

State because their families are unable to care for them. These systems also focus on securing permanent living arrangements through foster care and adoption for children who are unable to return home. The Children's Bureau is the agency within the Federal Government that is responsible for assisting State child welfare systems by promoting continuous improvement in the delivery of child welfare services. Knowledge development activities, such as these discretionary grants and training grants, contribute to that continuous improvement effort.

B. Legislative Framework

This section provides an overview of legislation applicable to all discretionary grants described in this program announcement. It addresses Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act (SSA), the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA), and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). It also briefly reviews other policies and rules pertaining to improving services to and outcomes for abused and neglected children, children in foster care, and children awaiting adoptive families.

Overview of Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act

With the passage of Public Law 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, the Federal government, through Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, emphasized the need for permanency for children in foster care and the importance of permanency planning and timely decision-making for these children. The 1994 Amendments to the SSA authorized the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to review State child and family service programs in order to ensure substantial conformity with the State plan requirements in Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. The child and family services review covers child protective services, foster care, adoption, family preservation and family support, and independent living. These reviews are designed to assist States in improving child welfare services and outcomes for recipient families and children by identifying strengths and weaknesses within State programs, as well as areas where technical assistance can lead to program improvements. These reviews serve several additional purposes including the following:

- Ensuring that Federal funds are spent in accordance with Federal statute, regulation, and policy;
- Linking the reviews to the joint planning, technical assistance, and program improvement process that exists between States and the ACF Regional Offices;
- Assisting States in developing the capacity to conduct self-evaluations;
- Assembling data that will inform national policy; and
- Providing timely and specific feedback to States directly related to program performance and outcomes.

Adoption and Safe Families Act

The passage of the landmark Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (P. L. 105-89) further amended the SSA and established unequivocally that our national goals for children in the child welfare system are **safety, permanency, and well-being**. ASFA increased protections for children in foster care by requiring case plans that included goals, a description of the placement and its appropriateness, and requiring periodic administrative reviews and judicial permanency placement determinations. ASFA focuses on moving children who are languishing in the system into adoption or other permanent placements, and it seeks to change the experience of children entering the system to increase the timeliness of securing permanency for them. ASFA embodies the following five key principles:

- The safety of children is the paramount concern that must guide all child welfare services.
- Foster care is a temporary setting and not a place for children to grow up.
- Permanency planning efforts for children should begin as soon as a child enters foster care and should be expedited by the provision of services to families.
- The child welfare system must focus on results and accountability.
- Innovative approaches are needed to achieve the goals of safety, permanency, and well-being.

To implement these principles, the law requires that child safety be the paramount concern in making service provision, placement, and permanency planning decisions. It reaffirms the importance of making reasonable efforts to preserve and reunify families, but also specifies that States are not required to make efforts to keep children with their parents when doing so places a child's safety in jeopardy. To ensure that the system respects a child's developmental needs, the law includes provisions that shorten the time frame for making permanency planning decisions and that establish a time frame for initiating proceedings to terminate parental rights.

Indian Child Welfare Act

The Indian Child Welfare Act [25 USC 1901 et seq.], passed in 1978, governs the jurisdiction, placement, termination of parental rights, and adoption of Native American children. It provides key standards that must be met by States when working with Tribal children, including notice to Tribes of State custody; standards for placement of Indian children in foster homes and termination of parental rights; active efforts to provide rehabilitative services; transfer of jurisdiction to Tribal courts and preferred placement of Indian children with extended families and other Indian families; and the Tribal right to intervene in State custody proceedings.

Multi-Ethnic Placement Act

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994, as amended, prohibits the delay or denial of any adoption or placement in foster care due to the race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster or adoptive parents and requires States to provide for diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom

homes are needed. Section 1808 of P.L. 104-188 affirms the prohibition against delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption or foster care on the basis of race, color, or national origin of the foster or adoptive parents or the child involved [42 USC 1996b].

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act

Since 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act has been the centerpiece of Federal law that addresses child protective services [42 USC, Section 5101 et seq.]. The 1996 amendments to CAPTA [Public Law 104-235] have significant implications for children in foster care. As amended, CAPTA requires States to implement procedures to expedite terminations of parental rights in cases where an infant is determined to be abandoned under State law. Also, the statute makes clear that the reunification of a child with a parent is not required when the parent has been found by a court of competent jurisdiction to have committed murder or voluntary manslaughter, to have aided or abetted to commit murder or manslaughter, or to have committed a felonious assault that resulted in bodily injury to a child of that parent.

Child Welfare Goals and Outcome Measures

The Adoption and Safe Families Act has had and will continue to have considerable impact on child welfare practice by establishing the goals of safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. It required HHS, in consultation with States and experts in the field, to identify a national set of outcome measures that can be used to gauge State and national progress in reaching these goals and to report on these outcomes in an annual report to Congress. The current goals of the outcomes are to:

1. Reduce the recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect;
2. Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care;
3. Increase permanency for children in foster care;
4. Reduce time in foster care to adoption;
5. Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry;
6. Increase placement stability; and
7. Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions.

On August 20, 1999, HHS announced the final list of child welfare outcome measures and the data elements that will be used to compute each State's performance on each measure (*Federal Register*, vol. 64, No. 16.) In August 2000, the HHS published *Child Welfare 1998: Annual Report*, the first in a series of annual reports to Congress. This report provides a State-by-State review of performance in relation to the national set of outcome measures.

Child and Family Service (CFS) Reviews: Outcomes and Results-Focused Monitoring

On January 25, 2000, HHS published a Final Rule in the *Federal Register* to establish new approaches to monitoring State child welfare programs that emphasize outcome-focused monitoring and accountability. The CFS Review measures State compliance with the State plan requirements under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act. Under this new rule, these State program reviews will use statewide data indicators and qualitative information to determine achievement in two areas: (1) outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency, and child and family well-being; and (2) systemic factors that directly impact the

State's capacity to deliver services leading to improved outcomes. Each outcome is evaluated using specific performance indicators as follows:

Safety Outcomes:

- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Permanency Outcomes:

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Child and Family Well-Being Outcomes:

- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The systemic factors being reviewed are related to the State's ability to deliver services leading to improved outcomes. The systemic factors include: (1) statewide information systems; (2) case review system; (3) quality assurance system; (4) staff and provider training; (5) service array; (6) agency responsiveness to the community; and (7) foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention.

Implications for Application Development

Applicants are advised that the discretionary research and demonstration programs described in this program announcement and subsequently funded by the Children's Bureau through the competitive award process will be those that will make substantial contributions to the fields of adoption, child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment, child welfare, and/or information systems. Funded applications will assist local, county, or State-based child welfare agencies in promoting and achieving the national goals of safety, permanency, and well-being for children by developing knowledge and improvements in practice that support achievement of the national goals through innovation, implementation of evidence-based programs and services, replication or testing of the transferability of successfully evaluated program models, multifaceted evaluation of new or existing programs and services, technology and knowledge transfer, and information dissemination.

Additional Information

The Children's Bureau's web site (<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb>) provides a wide range of information and links to other relevant web sites. Information readily available from the Children's Bureau web site includes, but is not limited to, Final Rules published in the *Federal Register*, a description of the child welfare outcome measures developed pursuant to the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, monitoring activities pertaining to the CFS reviews and Title IV-E eligibility, federally mandated information systems (e.g. Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System), and other publications and reports.

C. Statutory Authority Covering Discretionary Grant Programs in this Announcement with the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Numbers

Adoption Opportunities: Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978, as amended, [42 USC 5111] CFDA: 93.652

Promoting Safe and Stable Families: Section 430 of title IV-B, Subpart 2, of the Social Security Act, as amended, [42 USC 629] CFDA: 93.556

Child Abuse and Neglect: Section 104 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, as amended [42 USC 5101 et seq.] CFDA: 93.670

Abandoned Infants: Section 101 of the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act, as amended [42 USC 670 note] CFDA: 93.551

D. Structure of Priority Area Descriptions

Each priority area description found in section D is composed of the following sections:

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: This section specifies the types of agencies and organizations eligible to apply under the particular priority area. Eligibility to compete in some priority areas is limited to particular applicant organizations. For this reason, and because eligibility varies depending on statutory provisions, it is critical that the ‘Eligible Applicants’ section of each priority area be reviewed carefully.

Only agencies and organizations, not individuals, are eligible to apply. One agency must be identified as the applicant organization and will have legal responsibility for the grant. Additional agencies and organizations can be included as co-participants, subgrantees, subcontractors, or collaborators if they will assist in providing expertise and in helping to meet the needs of the child welfare field. For-profit organizations are eligible to participate as subgrantees or subcontractors with eligible nonprofit organizations under all priority areas where nonprofit organizations are the eligible applicants.

Any nonprofit organization submitting an application must submit proof of its nonprofit status in its application at the time of submission. The nonprofit agency can accomplish this by providing a copy of the applicant’s listing in the Internal Revenue Service’s (IRS) most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code, or by providing a copy of the current valid IRS tax exemption certification, or by providing a copy of the articles of incorporation bearing the seal of the State in which the corporation or association is located.

PURPOSE: This section presents the basic focus and/or broad goal(s) of the priority area.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: This section briefly discusses the background as well as the current state-of-the-art and/or current state-of-practice that supports the need for the particular priority area activity. Relevant information on projects previously funded by ACYF is noted, where applicable.

EVALUATION: This section presents the basic set of issues and specific information that will be evaluated in review of the application. Typically, they relate to the need for assistance, the results expected, project design, evaluation, community involvement, and organization and staff capabilities. Project products and materials, continuation of the project effort after the Federal support ceases, and dissemination/utilization activities, if appropriate, also will be evaluated. Inclusion and discussion of these items is important because the reviewers will use the information submitted by the applicant to evaluate the application against the criteria described in the evaluation section. The appropriateness of the budget to the goals of the project and reasonableness of costs also will be considered in the review process.

PROJECT DURATION: This section specifies the maximum allowable length of time for the project period. The term 'project period' refers to the total time a project is approved for support. Where appropriate, applicants may propose project periods that are shorter but not longer than the maximums specified in the priority area. The term 'budget period' refers to the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which a multiyear period of assistance is divided for budgetary and funding purposes.

For multiyear projects, continued Federal funding beyond the first budget period is dependent upon satisfactory performance by the grantee, availability of funds from future appropriations, and a determination that continued funding is in the best interest of the Government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: This section specifies the maximum amount of Federal support for the project for each budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: This section specifies the minimum non-Federal contribution required in relation to the maximum Federal funds requested for the project. Grantees must provide the non-Federal share of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. Cash or in-kind contributions may be used to meet the non-Federal share, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. Non-Federal share contributions may exceed the minimums specified in the various priority areas when the applicant is able to do so. However, applicants should propose only that non-Federal share they can realistically provide because, as a grantee, they must meet the proposed level of match support before the end of the project period. If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: This section specifies the number of projects that ACYF anticipates funding under the priority area, subject to the availability of funds.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: This section specifies the maximum allowable number of pages that will be reviewed. Please be advised that only the information within the specified page limitation will be reviewed and considered for funding.

CFDA NUMBER: This number from the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance must be used in each application in Item 10 of the Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance).

E. Other Considerations

The Commissioner may give special consideration to applications proposing services of special interest to the Government and to achieve geographic distributions of grants awards.

Applications of special interest may include, but are not limited to, applications focusing on unserved or inadequately served clients or service areas; programs addressing diverse ethnic populations; and research topics of particular importance. In making award decisions, ACYF may give preference to applications that focus on: substantially innovative strategies with the potential to improve theory an/or practice in child welfare, with an emphasis on adoption; a model practice or set of procedures that holds the potential for replication by organizations that administer or deliver foster care and/or adoption services and/or child protective services; substantial involvement (financial and/or programmatic) of the private sector, national, or State or community foundations; a favorable balance between Federal and non-Federal funds for the proposed project; or the potential for high benefit from low Federal investment. ACYF may also elect not to fund any applicants having known management, fiscal, reporting, programmatic, or other problems which make it unlikely that they would be able to provide effective services or effectively complete the proposed activity.

PART II. Priority Areas and Other Considerations

A. Priority Area List

Each application must be written in response to only one of the following Priority Areas, which are described later in this Part:

2001A: Adoption

2001A.1 Achieving Increased Adoptive Placements For Children in Foster Care

2001A.2 Field-Initiated Demonstration Projects Advancing the State of the Art in the Adoption Field

2001A.3 Quality Improvement Centers on Adoption

2001A.4 Evaluations of Existing Adoption Programs

2001B: Child Abuse and Neglect

2001B.1 National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment

2001B.2 Investigator Initiated Research Advancing the State of the Art in the Child Abuse and Neglect Field

2001B.3 Field-Initiated Demonstration Projects Advancing the State of the Art in the Child Abuse and Neglect Field

2001B.4 Quality Improvement Centers on Child Protective Services

2001B.5 Evaluations of Existing Child Abuse and Neglect Programs

2001C: Abandoned Infants

2001C.1 Support for Previous Comprehensive Service Demonstration Projects

2001C.2 Support for New Comprehensive Service Demonstration Projects

2001C.3 Family Support Services for Grandparents and Other Relatives Providing Caregiving for Children of Substance Abusing and HIV-Positive Women

2001C.4 Recreational Services for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS

2001D: Child Welfare

2001D.1 Demonstration Sites: Building Analytical Capacity for Child Welfare Programs in State Systems

2001D.2 Mentor Sites: Building Analytical Capacity for Child Welfare Programs in State Systems

B. Available Funds

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families proposes to award approximately 50 new grants in fiscal year 2001 from the competition resulting from this announcement. The funding is approximately \$2.8 million for Adoption Opportunities (Priority Area 2001A), \$3.8 million for Child Abuse and Neglect (Priority Area 2001B), \$4.2 million for Abandoned Infants Assistance (Priority Area 2001C) and \$1.6 million for Child Welfare (2001D).

The size of the actual awards will vary. The Federal government may elect to fund applications in FY 2002 out of the pool of applications submitted under this announcement, subject to the availability of resources in FY 2001 and the number of acceptable applications received.

C. Priority Area Description

2001A. Adoption

The major efforts mandated by the authorizing Adoption Opportunities program legislation, section 205 of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978, (P.L. 95-266), as amended are:

- (a) The development and implementation of a national adoption and foster care data gathering and analysis system;
- (b) The development and implementation of a national adoption information exchange system;
- (c) The development and implementation of an adoption training and technical assistance program;
- (d) Increasing services in support of the placement in adoptive families of minority children who are in foster care and have the goal of adoption, with a special emphasis on the recruitment of minority families;
- (e) Increasing post-legal adoption services for families who have adopted children with special needs;
- (f) Studying the nature, scope, and effects of the placement of children in kinship care arrangements, pre-adoptive, or adoptive homes;
- (g) Studying the efficacy of States contracting with public or private nonprofit agencies (including community-based and other organizations);
- (h) Consult with other appropriate Federal departments and agencies in order to promote maximum coordination of the services and benefits provided under programs carried out by such departments and agencies with those carried out by the Secretary, and provide for the coordination of such aspects of all programs within the DHHS relating to adoption;
- (i) Maintain a National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption; and
- (j) Provide for the provision of programs aimed at increasing the number of minority children (who are in foster care and have the goal of adoption) placed in adoptive families, with a special emphasis on recruitment of minority families.

In these areas, research and demonstration grants are awarded through a competitive process to States, local government entities, federally recognized Indian Tribes and tribal organizations,

colleges and universities, public or private nonprofit licensed child welfare or adoption agencies, adoption exchanges and community-based organizations with experience in working with minority populations.

Each of these areas is addressed each year, as new awards or as continuations of awards from previous years' competitions. Over time, the projects have demonstrated that improvements in placing children with adoptive families are achieved when permanent plans are made and carried out very early in the placement; when there are sufficiently trained and experienced staff; and when there are resources available and administrative commitments to adoption and to coordinated community-based efforts.

Funded projects have provided the field with the opportunity to develop collaboration strategies and models to increase the number of adoptions and to provide innovative services and tests of new service delivery models to strengthen families who have adopted children. Funded projects have assisted with child welfare services reform by incorporating and strengthening non-adversarial approaches to achieving permanency for children in the child welfare system and have focused on assisting States to improve their ability to meet the needs of the rising numbers of children waiting for permanent families.

While profiles of children in foster care vary from State to State, children with "special needs" constitute the majority among those waiting for adoption. The definition of special needs varies by State; nevertheless, the term generally refers to "older" children (beyond infancy) or children with any one of the following characteristics: membership in a minority ethnic or racial group; developmental problems and behavioral disorders; physical disabilities; history of abuse or neglect; or, need for sibling-group placement. One or more of these attributes may contribute to delay or prevent a child's timely placement in a permanent home, including an adoptive home.

Projects previously funded by the Children's Bureau have demonstrated that adoptions can be facilitated by designing and implementing plans for permanency early in the child's placement process, by better coordination between adoption agencies and communities, and by court procedures designed to achieve permanency through timely adoption. Availability of resources for adoptive placements, as well as the skills and experience of staff involved in recruitment and retention of adoptive families also were essential to recruitment of families that reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of children seeking permanent homes.

States and Tribes are encouraged to develop innovative initiatives that promote the elimination of administrative, court-related, family service, and community-involvement barriers that hinder adoptions of children with special needs. These initiatives should secure and sustain permanency for children who are either legally available for adoption and those who are not yet available, but for whom adoption is the goal.

In fiscal year 2001 the Children's Bureau will support grants in the following priority areas that continue to focus specifically on efforts to improve adoption-related activities and strategies to achieve permanency for children in foster care.

2001A.1 Adoptive Placements for Children in Foster Care

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Eligibility is limited to State social service agencies. Due to funding limitations and to generate and financially support the broadest range of issues and approaches, priority will be given to applicants who have not been funded under this priority in previous years. However, applicants previously funded under this priority area will not be precluded from receiving grants.

PURPOSE: To develop programs which will assist States in their efforts to increase the placement of children in foster care legally free for adoption according to a pre-established plan and goal.

Demonstration projects funded under this priority are expected to be major contributors of models or components of models for service providers and for outreach projects. A model demonstration project must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or, replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- (b) Determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies using multiple measures of results; and
- (c) Produce detailed procedures and materials, based on the evaluation, that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices and programs that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.

NOTE: Agencies that do not have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective, large-scale evaluation are advised to propose contracting with a third-party evaluator specializing in social science or evaluation, or a university or college to conduct the evaluation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The number of children adopted from foster care or with some other form of public agency involvement has increased substantially from 31,000 in 1997 to 46,000 in 1999. Yet, as of September 30, 2000, preliminary estimates indicate that 130,000 children were waiting to be adopted. Of these, the parental rights of 60,000 children had been terminated and the remainder had a goal of adoption. On average the children were 8 years old and had been in the foster care system continuously for 3 to 4 years. Two-thirds were children of color. The annual number of children freed for adoption is expected to grow as the States aggressively implement the Adoption and Safe Families Act. To meet the permanency needs of these children States will need to increase their efforts for finalizing adoptions for them.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

The grantee will design and implement a demonstration project that involves an approach to increasing adoptive placements of children in foster care, particularly children with special needs. Applicants will need to understand the goals and objectives of the Adoption Opportunities legislation described in this program announcement and show how their proposed projects would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives. Applicants must also demonstrate an understanding of the issues specific to the target population and community that must be considered as part of the development and implementation of the project.

Applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

- (1) project goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature and conceptual framework; and
- (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners and policymakers in the fields of adoption and child welfare.

Project Goals and Objectives (7 Points)

Applicants are expected to describe the context of the proposed project, including the geographic location, characteristics of the community, magnitude and severity of the problems and the needs to be addressed.

Applicants should describe characteristics of the target population, including the distribution according to age, race, and ethnicity; length of stay in foster care, the number of children waiting for adoption and the number of children legally available for adoption. The description should include key socioeconomic and demographic information on the target population and the anticipated number of clients (e.g., children and families to be recruited) to be served by the proposed project.

Applicants are expected to present a vision of the service systems they anticipate developing and compare them to existing systems. They should present a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the proposed project and discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or impede the implementation of their project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the Adoption Opportunities legislation and how the proposed project will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the characteristics and needs of the target population, the status of the existing system serving children in foster care and those waiting for adoption (particularly children with special needs), including barriers and gaps in this system (3 Points);

- (3) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes the benefits that clients will derive, the anticipated number of clients (children with special needs, prospective adoptive parents) to be served and the basis for these estimates (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed project will build local capacity to provide services to children with special needs and increase adoptive placement of those in foster care after Federal funding has ceased (1 Point); and
- (5) Extent to which the applicant presents a clear vision of the service system for the target population, including a coherent statement of the goals and objectives of the proposed project (1 Point).

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework (10 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the relevant literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices regarding child welfare, foster care and adoption pertaining to the proposed project (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in the field of foster care and adoptive placements (particularly for children with special needs) and specifies how the proposed approach would build on or differ from these initiatives (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant provides a cohesive conceptual framework that is evidence based (supported by theory, research, evaluation data and best practices), structures the proposed program, and explains the linkages between and among proposed demonstration activities and outcomes (5 Points).

Significance (8 Points)

Applicants should explain how the proposed demonstration project is innovative and will contribute to increased knowledge of the problems, issues, and effective strategies and practices in the field. Detailed information should be provided in the Approach section.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project is innovative and, if successfully implemented and evaluated, is likely to yield findings or results that will contribute to and promote evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional research in the field (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the components and strategies of the proposed project will be documented such that the successful elements of the approach may be replicated by other agencies addressing the same or similar problems and, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in other settings (2 Points); and

- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents a feasible and appropriate plan for the packaging and dissemination of findings, results, and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will enable others to use the information and strategies to implement evidence-based practice improvement (2 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (50 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a plan that: (1) reflects an understanding of the characteristics, needs and services currently available to the target population; (2) provides services that directly address the needs of the target population; (3) is evidence based and grounded in theory and practice; (4) is appropriate and feasible; (5) can be reliably evaluated; and (6) if successfully implemented, can be sustained after Federal funding has ceased.

This criterion consists of four topics: (1) program design; (2) project services; (3) evaluation; and (4) product development and dissemination.

Program Design (15 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to define goals and specific, measurable objectives for the project. Goals and objectives should not be confused. Goals are an end product of an effective project. Objectives are measurable steps for reaching goals.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the project and provide details on how the proposed project will be accomplished. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies and organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Applicants are expected to present a project design that includes detailed procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation. Applicants must describe how and what data will be collected on individuals and families; types of services provided; services used; and the types and nature of needs identified and met.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which goals, objectives and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable, as well as based on an understanding of the characteristics of the clients and the context of the intervention (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the design of the proposed project is evidence based and reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices on child welfare, foster care and adoption (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the program design is feasible and appropriate to address the needs of the target population (3 Points);

- (4) Extent to which the proposed program design includes procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation (3 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the proposed project will establish and coordinate linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations on the local, State or Federal level serving the target population (1 Point); and
- (6) Extent to which the proposed project is designed to build local capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance (2 Points).

Project Services (20 Points)

Specific Evaluation Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project is evidence based and will build on current theory, research, evaluation data and best practices to contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed project is innovative and involves the demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed services are comprehensive in scope and will address a broad range of the target population's needs (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed services involve the collaboration of appropriate partners (external and internal) for maximizing the effectiveness of service delivery (2 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the services to be provided by the program are described in detail, bridge gaps in the current service-delivery system, and benefit the recipients and the target community (7 Points).

Evaluation (10 Points)

Applicants are required to describe how the proposed project will be evaluated to determine the extent to which it has achieved its stated goals and objectives. The evaluation design is expected to include process and outcome analyses with qualitative and quantitative components.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include process and outcome analyses for assessing the effectiveness of project strategies and the implementation process (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative outcome data (2 Points);

- (3) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of program progress and a basis for program adjustments (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive and appropriate to the goals, objectives and context of the proposed project (2 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the evaluation plan is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies, and contribute to and promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings (2 Points).

Product Development and Dissemination Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are required to describe the products that will be developed during the implementation of the proposed project. Products may include questionnaires, interview guides and other data collection instruments, software designed for the proposed project, Internet applications (i.e., web postings), technical reports, journal articles, and a final report describing the target population, issues addressed, project design, implementation, outcomes and the results of the evaluation. Applicants should discuss the intended audiences for these products (e.g., researchers, policymakers, and practitioners) and present a dissemination plan specifying the venues for conveying the information.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the intended audience is clearly identified and defined and is appropriate to the goals of the proposed project (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the project's products will be useful to each of these audiences (1 Point);
- (3) Extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for developing these products, and provides a dissemination plan that is appropriate in scope and budget to each of these audiences (1 Point); and
- (4) Extent to which the products to be developed during the project are described clearly and will address the goal of dissemination of information to support evidence-based improvements of practices in the field (2 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining working relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure, including the management information system, to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a sound and feasible management plan for implementing the proposed project. This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. If appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors and consultants.

Applicants should include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates and accomplishments. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel (including evaluators or consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, and obtaining informed consent from participants (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff have the requisite training, experience, and expertise to carry out the proposed project on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. Include information on staff experience working with child welfare populations and, as appropriate, describe the demonstration or evaluation background and experience of the staff.

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director, key project staff and consultants have the necessary technical skill, knowledge and experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points).
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program services, data processing and analysis, evaluation, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to fulfill their assigned roles and functions.

Applicants should also describe their history and relationship with the targeted community. Include a complete, but brief discussion of relevant program, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant and partnering organizations collectively have experience in developing and implementing innovative programs or service-delivery systems in the field of child welfare, foster care, and adoption (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data processing and analysis, evaluation, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for the project director and the evaluator to attend an annual 3-day grantees' meeting in Washington, D.C. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the project costs and budget information submitted on the Standard Forms 424 and 424A for the proposed program are reasonable and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and the anticipated results and benefits (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 36 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of each grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$300,000 per budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: The grantee must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. Therefore, a project requesting \$300,000 per budget period must include a match of at least \$33,333 per budget period. The non-Federal share may be cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that three projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 75 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this number will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.652

2001A.2: Field-Initiated Demonstration Projects Advancing the State of the Art in the Adoption Field

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: States, local government entities, public and private nonprofit licensed child welfare and adoption agencies, and community-based nonprofit adoption organizations that currently work with children in the public child welfare system, and universities with experience in adoptions. Applicants without direct access or responsibility for the targeted children must apply in partnership with States, local government entities, or public or private nonprofit licensed child welfare and adoption agencies.

PURPOSE: To support continuous innovation and improvement in the quality of adoption services on topics identified by the field as cutting edge or to test new solutions to continuing problems. Topics potentially of interest include but are not limited to: defining and measuring child well-being, assessing service outcomes, adoption outreach to single adults, adoption outreach to males, adoption services for sibling groups, services in support of guardianships, special outreach and support for adoption of children over 7, supportive services for trans-racial adoptive families. New solutions of interest include, but are not limited to service-provision agreements across service-providing agencies (e.g., mental health and health).

Demonstration projects supported under this priority are expected to be major contributors of models or components of models for service providers and for outreach projects. A model demonstration project must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data, or replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- (b) Determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies using multiple measures of results; and
- (c) Produce detailed procedures and materials, based on the evaluation, that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices and programs that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: While results of previously funded projects have expanded knowledge about adoption, improved practice, and provided data for policy formation and decisionmaking, knowledge has not advanced at a uniform rate across all areas of interest. At the same time, new problems, challenges, complexities, and dilemmas arise. This priority area provides an opportunity for applicants to contribute to the continued expansion of knowledge about the familial and systemic aspects of successful adoption for subgroups such as sibling groups, children with disabilities, adolescents, and children placed trans-racially. Projects funded under this initiative should be highly innovative and demonstrate contributions to improving safety, permanency, and well-being for children, with special emphasis on shortening the time required to achieve permanency for these children and reducing the number of adoption disruptions.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application under this priority area. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

The grantee will design and implement a demonstration project that involves an innovative approach to addressing the needs of the target population. Applicants will need to understand the goals and objectives of the Adoption Opportunities legislation described in this program announcement and how their proposed project would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives. Applicants must also demonstrate an understanding of the issues specific to the target population and community that must be considered as part of the development and implementation of the demonstration project.

Applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application: (1) program goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature and conceptual framework; and (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners and policymakers in the fields of adoption and child welfare.

Project Goals and Objectives (7 Points)

Applicants must describe the context of the proposed demonstration project, including the geographic location, environment, magnitude and severity of the problem and the needs to be addressed. The description should present the strengths and weaknesses of current services and the gaps in service provided by the applicant and other agencies (in the location) or other topics or issues to be addressed by the project. It should also include key socioeconomic and demographic information on the target populations and the anticipated number of clients (e.g., individuals and families) to be served.

Applicants are expected to present a vision of the service systems they anticipate developing and compare them to existing systems. They should present a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the proposed project and discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the implementation of the project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the Adoption Opportunities legislation and how the proposed project will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant presents a clear vision of the service system for the target population, including a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the proposed project (1 Point);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the characteristics of the target population, the service needs of this population and community, and the status of existing services for children, adolescents and their families/caregivers (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes the benefits that clients will derive, the anticipated number of clients (e.g., individuals and families) to be served and the basis for these estimates (1 Point); and
- (5) Extent to which the proposed project will build local capacity to provide services to children, adolescents and their families/caregivers after Federal funding has ceased (1 Point).

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework (10 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the current and relevant literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices pertaining to the proposed demonstration project (3 Points);

- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in the field and how the approach will build on or differ from this work (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant provides a cohesive conceptual framework or logic model that is evidence based (supported by theory, research, evaluation data and best practices), structures the proposed program, and explains the linkages between and among proposed demonstration activities and outcomes (5 Points).

Significance (8 Points)

Applicants should explain how the proposed demonstration project is innovative and will contribute to increased knowledge of the problems, issues, and effective strategies and practices in the field. Detailed information should be provided in the Approach section.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project is innovative and, if successfully implemented and evaluated, is likely to yield findings or results that will contribute to and promote evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional exploration by the field (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the components and strategies of the proposed project will be documented such that the successful elements of the approach may be replicated by other agencies addressing the same or similar problems and, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in other settings (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents a feasible and appropriate plan for the packaging and dissemination of findings, results, and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) that will enable others to use the information and strategies to implement evidence-based practice improvement (2 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (53 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a plan that: (1) reflects an understanding of the characteristics, needs and services currently available to the target population; (2) provides services that directly address the needs of the target population; (3) is evidence based and grounded in theory and practice; (4) is appropriate and feasible; (5) can be reliably evaluated; and (6) if successfully implemented, can be sustained after Federal funding has ceased.

This criterion consists of four topics that should be addressed in the application: (1) program design; (2) project services; (3) evaluation; and (4) product development and dissemination.

Program Design (16 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to define goals and specific, measurable objectives for the project. Goals and objectives should not be confused. Goals are the end product of an effective project. Objectives are measurable steps for reaching goals.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the project and provide details on how the proposed project will be accomplished. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies or organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Applicants are expected to present a project design that includes detailed procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation. Applicants must also describe how and what data will be collected on individuals and families; types of services provided; services used; and types and nature of needs identified and met.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable, as well as based on an understanding of the characteristics of the clients and the context of the proposed intervention (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the design of the proposed project is evidence based and reflects up-to-date knowledge from the research and known effective practices literature (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the design is feasible and appropriate to address the needs of the target population (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed design describes procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation (3 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the proposed project will establish and coordinate linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations on the local, State or Federal level providing services to the target population (2 Points); and
- (6) Extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance (2 Points).

Project Services (20 Points)

Applicants are required to provide a detailed description of the services to be provided by the program and how these services will bridge gaps or substantially improve the current service-delivery system and benefit the target population.

Specific Evaluation Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project is evidence based and will build on current theory, research, evaluation data and best practices to contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (4 Points);

- (2) Extent to which the proposed project is innovative and involves the demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed services are comprehensive in scope and will address a broad range of the target population's needs (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed services involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of service delivery (2 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the services to be provided, when consisted as a whole, will be beneficial to the intended recipients and the target community (7 Points).

Evaluation (12 Points)

Applicants are required to describe how the proposed project will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives. It is anticipated that the evaluation strategy will include process and outcome analyses and include both qualitative and quantitative components.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for assessing the effectiveness of project strategies and the implementation process (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative outcome data (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of program progress and a basis for program adjustments (2 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive and appropriate to the goals, objectives and context of the proposed project (3 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the evaluation plan is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies, and contribute to and promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings (2 Points).

Product Development and Dissemination Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are required to describe the products that will be developed during the proposed project. Products may include questionnaires, interview guides and other data collection instruments, software designed for the proposed project, Internet applications (i.e., Web postings), technical reports, journal articles, and a final report describing the target population, issues addressed, project design, implementation, outcomes and the results of the evaluation. Applicants should discuss the intended audiences for these products (e.g., researchers, policymakers, and practitioners) and present a dissemination plan specifying the venues for conveying the information.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the intended audience is clearly identified and defined and is appropriate to the goals of the proposed project (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the project's products will be useful to each of these audiences (1 Point);
- (3) Extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for developing these products, and provides a dissemination plan that is appropriate in scope and budget to each of these audiences (1 Point); and
- (4) Extent to which the products to be developed during the project are described clearly and will address the goal of dissemination of information to support evidence-based improvements of practices in the field (2 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining work among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any proposed consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure, including its management information system, to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. If appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors and consultants.

Applicants are required to provide a plan that describes the role, responsibilities and time commitments of each proposed staff position, including consultants, subcontractors and/or partners. Include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates, accomplishments and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate,

applicants should present a plan for training project staff, as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined, and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, and obtaining informed consent from participants (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff have the requisite training, experience, and expertise to carry out the proposed project on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. Include information on staff experience working with child welfare populations and, as appropriate, describe the research, demonstration, evaluation, or practice background and experience of the staff.

Applicants are required to present brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions in the project narrative. Resumes must indicate what position the individual will fill and position descriptions must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director, key project staff, and consultants have the necessary technical skill, knowledge and experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur.

If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating

organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Applicants should also describe their history and relationship with the targeted community. Include a complete, but brief discussion of relevant program, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant organization and partnering organizations collectively have experience in developing and implementing innovative projects, programs, or service delivery systems in the adoption, foster care, or child welfare field (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (7 Points)

Applicants are expected to allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for the project director and the evaluator to attend an annual 3-day grantees' meeting in Washington, D.C. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the project costs and budget information submitted on the Standard Forms 424 and 424A for the proposed program are reasonable and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and the anticipated results and benefits (4 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 48 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of each grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$250,000 per budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: The grantee must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. Therefore, a project requesting \$250,000 per budget period must include a match of at least \$27,778 per budget period. The non-Federal share may be cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. If approved for funding, grantees will be held

accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 75 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.652

2001A.3 Quality Improvement Centers on Adoption

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Public or private nonprofit agencies, organizations, and institutions of higher learning, alone or in partnerships with child welfare agencies. The Children's Bureau especially encourages partnerships between public agencies and private nonprofit agencies, universities and foundations with adoption experience.

PURPOSE: To award cooperative agreements to test the feasibility of funding, on a regional basis, centers focused on improving the capabilities and capacities of organizations within defined geographic areas to assess needs and resources and to plan and implement, in a consortium-type collaboration, research and demonstration activities to improve services for children available for adoption and potential adoptive parents. Each Quality Improvement Center (QIC) will be awarded funds for planning and implementation phases. At the end of the planning period, each QIC will have identified a single topic or focus for its activities. Each QIC will be expected, during the implementation phase, to sponsor, monitor and evaluate research or demonstration projects that test models or hypotheses at multiple sites. Each QIC will also provide technical assistance to local grantees funded under this initiative.

Suggestions for topics include but are not limited to: demonstrations on adoption by single adults, adoptions by males, adoption of sibling groups; research on differences in outcomes for adopted children compared to children in guardianship relationships, improving adoption probabilities for children over age 7, adoption success for children with special needs, outcome research for children adopted trans-racially, prospective and retrospective studies on disrupted and dissolved adoptions.

NOTE: A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding Federal assistance in which substantial Federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of the Children's Bureau and the grantee prior to award. The Children's Bureau anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. The involvement and collaboration includes Children's Bureau review and approval of planning stages of the activities before implementation phases may begin; Children's Bureau involvement in the establishment of policies and procedures that maximize open competition, and rigorous and impartial development, review and funding of subgrant or subcontract activities, if applicable; and

Children's Bureau and recipient joint collaboration in the performance of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, information technology enhancements, training and technical assistance, publications or products, and evaluation). Close monitoring by the Children's Bureau of the requirements stated in this announcement that limit the grantee's discretion with respect to scope of services offered, organizational structure and management processes, coupled with close Children's Bureau monitoring during performance which may, in order to assure compliance with the intent of this funding, exceeds those Federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Roles and Responsibilities of Quality Improvement Centers

Quality Improvement Centers are expected to perform the following functions:

- (a) Improve the capabilities of geographical regions to coordinate regional and community-based adoption efforts for children (particularly those with special needs);
- (b) Foster the development of collaborative partnerships on the local and regional level;
- (c) Promote collaborative problem solving;
- (d) Develop and implement research and demonstration projects to promote innovation, evidence-based practice improvements, and advancement of knowledge;
- (e) Establish an information-sharing network to disseminate information on promising practices; and
- (f) Improve the quality and availability of service delivery systems in the adoption and child welfare fields in a specified geographic area.

It must be emphasized that the QICs will not assume training, technical assistance and information dissemination functions and responsibilities currently performed by the 10 National Resource Centers, 2 Clearinghouses, and four technical support projects operated by the Children's Bureau. Additionally, in fiscal year 2000, the Children's Bureau funded several Child Welfare Training Projects to develop training on these topics. Therefore, the QICs will neither develop training curriculum nor provide training to State or local CPS or other child welfare supervisory staff or caseworkers on methods for improving the quality of frontline CPS or other child welfare practices.

The distinctive function of the QICs that separates them from other support resources provided by the Children's Bureau is that the QICs will serve as a mechanism for announcing and disbursing grant funding to community-based organizations and other agencies and institutions within their region to conduct research and demonstration projects. Each QIC will also monitor and evaluate these research or demonstration projects and provide technical assistance and support to these local grantees.

Research and demonstration projects sponsored by the QICs under this initiative must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based model or innovative improvement to the adoption service-delivery system with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data;
- (b) Conduct an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies using multiple measures of results; and
- (c) Produce detailed procedures and materials, based on the evaluation, that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices and programs that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.

Specific Tasks To Be Performed by the Quality Improvement Centers During the Planning and Implementation Phases

Applicants are required to submit a design that clearly and concisely describes a strategy for a 12-month planning phase (Phase I) for the development of the QIC to be followed by a 48-month implementation phase (Phase II). In Phase II, the QIC will announce, award, monitor and evaluate 36-month, research and demonstration project grants in their region. Each QIC will also provide technical assistance to local grantees funded under this initiative.

A national evaluation of the operations of the QICs will be sponsored by the Children's Bureau and conducted by a third-party evaluator. The QICs will be required to cooperate fully with this and any other evaluation requested by the Children's Bureau. The QICs will also be required to conduct an evaluation of the research and demonstration projects they sponsor.

TRAVEL FOR CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS: Approximately 12 weeks after the award of the 12-month planning phase of the cooperative agreement, the project director of each QIC will be required to attend a 2-day conference in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Children's Bureau for QIC awardees funded under this priority area.

Additionally, 10 months after the award of the 12-month planning cooperative agreements, QIC awardees will be required to make an oral presentation to the Children's Bureau staff in Washington, D.C., to describe and defend their plan for the Phase II-Version A implementation (described below). Applicants are advised to propose sending three project staff to make the presentation—the project director, a member of the Regional Advisory Group, and one other representative (consultant, community representative, or potential consortium member).

The budget for the 12-month planning grant should include funding for these three meetings in Washington, D.C.: the project director's meeting at approximately week 12, the three-person presentation meeting at month 10, and two key staff persons to attend the Children's Bureau annual grantees meeting, usually held in the spring. In each of the four implementation years, QIC awardees will be expected to send only the project director and the evaluator to the annual grantee meeting.

GEOGRAPHIC REGION: As part of the project narrative, applicants are required to describe the specific geographic region that will be served by the QIC. This section should include a

justification for the selection of the region, including why this configuration is optimal based on, for example, geographic size, population density, the size and seriousness of the needs of the target population, resources available and strengths and weaknesses of the adoption system on the regional and local level.

Applicants are advised, but not required, to propose a regional configuration consisting of contiguous States or counties. If a different configuration is proposed, then the rationale for that design must be justified in detail.

TOPIC FOCUS OF THE QIC: Applicants, as part of the application process, are not required to identify a topic or service population that will be the single focus of the QIC. Rather, they are encouraged to describe the context within which the QIC will operate and the procedures for selecting that focus, as outlined below. They should include a description of the characteristics of the children awaiting adoption and the pool of potential adoptive parents in the proposed region; barriers to adoption in the proposed region; and regional, State and local resources including gaps in services at these levels. Successful applicants will be expected to select the topic focus during the planning process, based on a needs assessment of the region and input from a number of sources, including a Regional Advisory Group. (Details about the composition of the Regional Advisory Group are provided throughout this priority area description.)

Plan for Phase I (Planning)

Although applicants will be accorded considerable flexibility in developing a strategy tailored to the needs and resources of their proposed region, it is anticipated that applications for the first year of funding must present a method for completing the following tasks during Phase I:

- (a) Form a Regional Advisory Group that will set goals and objectives for the QIC; select the focus for the QIC; define research, policy and practice issues pertaining to the topic; develop a work plan and timetable for development of the Phase II implementation plan; develop the Phase II implementation plan; and provide oversight of plans and activities conducted under this funding. The Children's Bureau anticipates that the Regional Advisory Group will consist of five to eight members.
- (b) Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the region that describes and evaluates the effectiveness of current service delivery systems, and identifies service gaps and other barriers (e.g., legal, cultural, administrative) to adoption. This assessment should include, but not be limited to, the collection and analysis of data on the following factors, as appropriate:
 - Demographic characteristics of the children awaiting adoption (particularly those with special needs) and the adoptive parent pool;
 - Types of outreach, recruitment, retention approaches for potential adoptive parents, including financial incentives, post-adoption services, and culturally sensitive outreach techniques;
 - Legal, administrative, court, social service and other barriers to adoption;

- Agencies on the regional, State and local level that are engaged in addressing the topic;
- Availability of resources on the regional, State and local level; and
- Gaps in resources on the regional, State and local level.

In developing a strategy for conducting the needs assessment, applicants are advised to propose methods that do not require respondents to complete written surveys or questionnaires, because these surveys will require prior approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB approval process takes approximately 5 to 6 months. Methods that do not require prior OMB approval include conference calls, focus groups, and unstructured telephone or in-person interviews.

- (c) Select a focus for the QIC in conjunction with the Regional Advisory Group and input from key regional, State, and local agencies and organizations. The focus should reflect the findings from the regional needs assessment.
- (d) Conduct a literature review that provides a comprehensive analysis of the research and promising practices nationally and regionally on the topic selected, including cultural, financial, legal, bureaucratic and other barriers to the adoption of children (particularly those with special needs) and potential adoptive parents.

In the implementation phase (Phase II), the topic selected will be the focus of 3 years of research/demonstration projects conducted in the region. Therefore, the topic has to be of sufficient scope and magnitude to merit intensive investigation. The topic selected should have national scope, and the findings from the research and demonstration projects sponsored by the QIC should have a high probability of significantly advancing theory, policy and evidence-based practice in the field. Additionally, and as explained below, the research and demonstration projects implemented in Phase II should be designed to evaluate multiple approaches and/or multisite interventions on the selected focus topic. This strategy dictates that the number of subjects (e.g., children, families, social service providers) be large enough to sustain a rigorous, methodologically sound implementation and evaluation plan.

Because the QIC initiative is funded through a cooperative agreement, the topic selected will be subject to final approval by the Children's Bureau.

Plan for Phase II-Version A: Implementation

In Phase I, each QIC, in conjunction with the Regional Advisory Group, will be required to develop and submit a Phase II-Version A plan for announcing and awarding research and demonstration grants to local sites in their region, and monitoring and evaluating these projects. These plans are expected to build on knowledge gained from a review of the literature and promising practices in the field, the results from the regional needs assessment, and input from other sources.

Applicants are required to submit a preliminary design for Phase II-Version A in this application that presents a clear and comprehensive vision of how the proposed QIC would operate.

Applicants are expected to describe the approach and processes that will be used to develop the implementation plan, and address anticipated logistical and administrative issues. The Phase II-Version A plan will be due 9 months after the award of the cooperative agreement and must include, but not be limited to, the following components:

1. Comprehensive review of the literature developed during the planning phase;
2. Conceptual framework or logic model describing the linkages between and among the (1) attributes of the populations, problems, conditions, and systems that are the target of the interventions; (2) strategies; (3) resources; (4) traditional and innovative services to be provided; and (5) short- and long-term outcomes;
3. Administrative structure for announcing the availability of funding, and reviewing and awarding local grants, including program description, eligibility, funding levels, application evaluation criteria and selection process;
4. Because QICs are designed to attract interest and elicit support from agencies and organizations within the region that may have little experience with research, evaluation and the grant award process, the QICs will be required to provide technical assistance to prospective local grantees to assist them in designing initiatives that meet the standards for research and demonstration projects funded under this initiative. The design of these projects must be evidence-based with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data. They must also pertain to issues of national scope and incorporate logic models and an evaluation framework.

At a minimum, technical assistance provided by the QICs to prospective local grantees should consist of instructions and materials providing information on grant application requirements, suitable grant topics, the role of partnerships and collaborations, program and research designs, data sources and data collection strategies, and evaluation designs and analytic techniques. Other vehicles for providing technical assistance may be proposed. For example, QIC applicants may propose conducting a one-day workshop open to all prospective grantees in the designated geographical region. The workshop should be designed to provide information and answer questions to attendees;

5. Technical assistance to local grantees awarded funding by the QIC. QICs will be required to not only monitor the operations of the local projects, but also provide on-going support, guidance, and technical assistance to grantee sites to assist them in project implementation, data collection and evaluation;
6. Administrative and management structure for ensuring that local projects are implemented within 90-days of the award of their funding by the QIC, monitoring and supervising local grants funded under this initiative, including appropriate plans for fiscal accountability from the local projects;
7. Mechanisms for forming and maintaining a consortium and information-sharing network consisting of partnerships with and among sites awarded grants sponsored by the QIC (The Children's Bureau anticipates that the members of the consortium will meet regularly to exchange information and engage in collaborative problem-solving efforts.);

8. Methodology for evaluating local research and demonstration projects, including ensuring that appropriate qualitative and quantitative process and outcome data are collected by local sites and participating agencies and organizations;
9. Strategy for information dissemination, including fostering and strengthening communication and coordination activities with National Resource Centers and clearinghouses including the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect; National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse; and
10. Institutionalize linkages with appropriate agencies and organizations on the local, State, or Federal level that are addressing adoption issues.

Presentation. Ten months after the award of the cooperative agreement, grantees will be required to make an oral presentation to the Children's Bureau staff in Washington, D.C., to describe and defend their plan for the Phase II-Version A implementation.

Plan for Phase II-Version B: Implementation

One month after the presentation, the QIC will be required to submit a revised implementation work plan (Plan for Phase II-Version B) incorporating the recommendations of the Children's Bureau staff. This plan will be subject to further review and approval by the Children's Bureau prior to continuation funding.

EVALUATION: The four criteria that follow will be used to review and evaluate each application under this priority area. Each criterion should be addressed in the project description section of the application. The point values indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process. (100 Points total.)

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

In Phase I, the grantee will develop a QIC designed to increase the capabilities of a designated geographical region to address the placement, adoption and services for children, particularly those with special needs. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the goals and objectives of the QIC initiative described in this program announcement and how their proposed project would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives. This criterion consists of three components that should be addressed in the application: (1) program goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature; and (3) significance to researchers, academics, practitioners, policymakers and others involved in the adoption and child welfare fields.

As part of the application process, applicants should identify potential members of the Regional Advisory Group and obtain letters of commitment from these candidates. These letters should be included at the end of the application. It is anticipated that the Regional Advisory Group will consist of five to eight members, including academics/researchers, State/local government representatives, and service providers from the proposed region. These candidates should have substantial expertise in the adoption and child welfare areas, extensive experience in developing collaborative partnerships with a wide variety of groups, and have the management skills necessary to ensure the timely completion of QIC tasks.

Project Goals and Objectives (15 Points)

Applicants must describe the context and geographic location to be served by the proposed QIC. This description should present an overview of the strengths and weakness of current services and the gaps in service provided by the applicant and other agencies in the region. It should also include key socioeconomic and demographic characteristics for the children awaiting adoption (particularly those with special needs) and the adoptive parent pool. Administrative, legal, cultural, financial, and other types of barriers to adoption should also be considered. Additional supporting documentation may be provided at the discretion of the applicant, but will count toward the total allowable page limit.

Applicants should present a vision of the goals, objectives, functions and operations of the QIC they anticipate developing. This narrative should also describe how the proposed QIC will promote evidence-based practices to improve the adoption services system in the proposed region. Applicants should also discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the implementation of the project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant understands the goals and objectives of the QIC initiative and how the proposed project will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the challenges, in terms of both opportunities and barriers, to designing and implementing the QIC (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the service needs of the region selected by the applicant; the status of existing services; and the type and extent of barriers to adoption (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear and concise vision of the role of the QIC in addressing the service needs of the region and localities (3 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the proposed QIC, if successfully implemented, will build local and regional capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address adoption needs (3 Points).

Review of the Literature (5 Points)

Applicants are required to present a concise summary of the literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices and promising approaches nationally and regionally in the adoption and child welfare fields. The literature review should include a description of the cultural, financial, legal, bureaucratic and other types of barriers to adoption of children (particularly those with special needs) and strategies for identifying, recruiting and retaining potential adoptive parents.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise, preliminary review of the relevant literature, including best practices and promising approaches pertaining to issues in the adoption and child welfare fields (5 Points).

Significance (5 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed QIC will build an infrastructure of collaborative partnerships and information networks that will promote research and innovative demonstration projects that will contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed QIC, if successfully implemented, is likely to yield findings or results that may be used by other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues (1 Point);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed QIC, if successfully implemented, is likely to develop strategies and sponsor research and demonstration projects that can be replicated by other regions and/or agencies addressing the same or similar problems and, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings (1 Point); and
- (4) Extent to which the findings, results, and products (such as information, materials, processes, and techniques) of the proposed QIC and QIC-sponsored research and demonstration projects will be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies (1 Point).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (40 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a Phase I plan that addresses the components described in the Background section of this announcement and includes, but is not limited to: (1) an analysis of the characteristics, needs and services currently available to children awaiting adoption and the pool of prospective parents and the implications for the design of the service delivery system; (2) the composition, role and responsibilities of a Regional Advisory Group; (3) a feasible and appropriate method for conducting a comprehensive needs assessment of the region; (4) a systematic approach for identifying a topic focus; (5) a strategy for developing a comprehensive review of the literature and best practices; (6) an approach and method for the timely development of the Phase II implementation plan; and (7) a preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan that presents a clear and comprehensive vision of how the proposed QIC would operate.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the overall design and strategies to be used by the proposed QIC demonstrate an understanding of issues in the adoption area nationally, and the

characteristics, needs and services currently available to children awaiting adoption and the pool of prospective parents in the proposed region (4 Points);

- (2) Extent to which the composition of the Regional Advisory Group: (a) represents the key governmental, and public and private agencies and organizations that are most active locally and in the proposed region, (b) reflects the diversity of the proposed regions and (c) includes members who have the expertise and managerial skills appropriate to Regional Advisory Group membership (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the roles and responsibilities of the Regional Advisory Group are appropriate and clearly described (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the principles and procedures used to govern the activities of the Regional Advisory Group are appropriate and clearly explained (1 Point);
- (5) Extent to which the plan for conducting the regional needs assessment is: (a) appropriate and feasible; (b) likely to result in the development of a comprehensive description and evaluation of the effectiveness of the current service delivery system; and (c) likely to identify service gaps and other barriers to adoption (3 Points);
- (6) Extent to which the strategy for identifying a single topic focus for the QIC involves input from a wide range of stakeholders, including key regional, State, and local agencies and organizations (2 Points);
- (7) Extent to which the Phase I plan presents a feasible and appropriate method for conducting a comprehensive review of the literature on the topic selected that includes the identification of best practices and promising approaches in the adoption field regionally and nationally (2 Points);
- (8) Extent to which the approach to be used in developing the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan is likely to result in the timely production of a plan that is feasible and appropriate, and includes input from a wide range of relevant sources (2 Points);
- (9) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents a viable conceptual framework or logic model describing the linkages between and among the (a) attributes of the populations, problems, conditions, and systems that are the target of the interventions; (b) resources; (c) traditional and innovative services to be provided; and (d) short- and long-term outcomes (4 Points);
- (10) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents an appropriate and feasible approach for creating an administrative structure for announcing the availability of funding, and reviewing and awarding local grants, including program description, agency eligibility, funding levels, application evaluation criteria and selection process (3 Points);
- (11) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents an appropriate and feasible plan for providing technical assistance to prospective

local grantees to assist them in designing initiatives that meet the standards for research and demonstration projects funded under this initiative (1 Point);

- (12) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation presents an appropriate and feasible plan for providing support, guidance and technical assistance to local grantees to assist them in project implementation, data collection and evaluation (1 Point);
- (13) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents an appropriate and feasible plan constructing an administrative and management structure for ensuring that local projects are implemented within 90-days of the award of their funding by the QIC, monitoring local grants funded under this initiative, including appropriate plans for fiscal accountability from the local projects (1 Point);
- (14) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents a feasible and appropriate approach to the formation of a consortium and information-sharing network consisting of partnerships with and among sites awarded grants sponsored by the QIC (3 Points);
- (15) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents a feasible and appropriate methodology for evaluating local research and demonstration projects, including ensuring that appropriate qualitative and quantitative process and outcome data are collected by local sites and participating agencies and organizations (2 Points);
- (16) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents feasible and appropriate strategies for information dissemination, including fostering and strengthening communication and coordination activities with National Resource Centers and clearinghouses including the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect; National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (1 Point);
- (17) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan identifies and addresses the conceptual, management and logistical issues involved in developing and implementing the QIC sponsored research and demonstration projects (2 Points); and
- (18) Extent to which the overall preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents a clear and comprehensive vision of how the proposed QIC would operate once the grants are awarded (2 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (25 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed QIC. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining work among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any consultants and

subcontractors; and (6) reasonableness of the organizational structure, including its management information system, to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a management plan describing a sound and feasible plan of action for implementing the QIC. This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. If appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors and consultants.

Applicants should include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their contribution or effort.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates, accomplishments and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to accomplishing the Phase I tasks on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (5 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined, and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed QIC (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the application discusses factors that may affect the development and implementation of the QIC and presents realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties (2 Points); and
- (4) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, and obtaining consent from participants (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications (8 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff, including consultants, have the requisite training, experience, expertise and commitment of sufficient time to conduct all of the QIC planning activities on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. Include information on staff experience working with child welfare populations and, as appropriate,

describe the management, research, demonstration, or evaluation background and experience of the staff.

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included in the project narrative. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which individuals proposed for key positions have the necessary technical skill and experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities, including knowledge of adoption issues, collaborative partnerships, consortium management, design and implementation of research and/or demonstration projects, technical assistance in the adoption area, and research and evaluation methodology (5 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (3 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (7 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully design and implement the proposed QIC on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant has experience in designing, implementing and/or evaluating research and/or demonstration projects on a local, regional or national level (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has experience in developing collaborative partnerships and/or consortia designed on a local, regional, or national level to promote collaborative problem solving and information sharing (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

The award for the 12-month planning phase will not exceed \$175,000 per QIC. The funding levels for years 2 through 5 will be \$500,000 per year per QIC. Applicants are advised that for the 48-month implementation phase, the proposed budget allocated by the QIC for administrative, management, and evaluation purposes may not exceed \$125,000 of the annual

Federal funding for the implementation phase. The remaining \$375,000 is to be allocated to local grantee sites.

Approximately 12 weeks after the award of the 12-month planning phase of the cooperative agreement, the project director of each QIC will be required to attend a 2-day conference in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Children's Bureau for QIC awardees funded under this priority area.

Additionally, 10 months after the award of the 12-month planning cooperative agreements, QIC awardees will be required to make an oral presentation to the Children's Bureau staff in Washington, D.C., to describe and defend their plan for the Phase II-Version A implementation. Applicants are advised to propose sending three project staff to make the presentation—the project director, a member of the Regional Advisory Group, and one other representative (consultant, community representative, or potential consortium member). The budget for the 12-month planning grant should include funding for these three meetings in Washington D.C.: the project director's meeting at approximately week 12, the three-person presentation meeting at month 10, and two key staff persons to attend the Children's Bureau annual grantees meeting, usually held in the spring.

In each of the four implementation years, QIC awardees will be expected to send only the project director and the evaluator to the annual grantee meeting.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results and benefits (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The cooperative agreements will be awarded for a period of 60 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$175,000 per QIC for the first 12 months. Years 2 through 5 will be funded at a level of \$500,000 per budget period per QIC. The proposed budget allocated by the QIC for administrative, management, and evaluation purposes in years 2 through 5 may not exceed \$125,000 per year.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: The grantee must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved administrative cost of the project. The total approved administrative cost is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. Therefore, a project requesting \$175,000 for the 12-month planning phase must include a match of at least

\$19,444. In years 2 through 5, awardees will be required to provide a 10 percent match on the total cost allocated by the QIC for administration, management and evaluation. A project requesting an annual total of \$125,000 for these purposes will be required to provide a match of at least \$13,889 per year. QIC awardees are not required to provide a 10 percent match on the approximately \$350,000 that will be awarded to local sites.

The non-Federal share may be cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION. The length of the application is limited to 100 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.652

2001A.4 Evaluations of Existing Adoption Programs

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: States, local government entities, public and private nonprofit licensed child welfare and adoption agencies, and community-based nonprofit adoption organizations which currently work with children in the public child welfare system, and universities with experience in adoptions and child welfare issues. Collaborative efforts and interdisciplinary applications are encouraged; however, a primary applicant must be identified.

PURPOSE: To support continuous innovation and improvement in the quality of adoption services by evaluating existing adoption programs that incorporate features and components that hold promise for contributing to an expansion of knowledge about familial and systemic aspects of successful adoption, shortening the time required to achieve permanency and reducing the number of adoption disruptions. The focus of evaluations funded under this priority is programs or projects for children targeted by Adoptions Opportunities legislation and served by a public child welfare agency that has never been evaluated.

As with other offerings, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families maintains its interest in research and evaluation that will be especially informative about over-represented populations and communities, and special populations (i.e., racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities or other special needs).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The findings from evaluation projects supported under this priority are expected to provide insights into more efficient and effective approaches to the delivery of adoption services. While applicants will be accorded considerable latitude in the selection of the program to be evaluated and the proposed focus of the evaluation, the Children's Bureau is interested in evaluation projects that are likely to address one or more of the following goals: expand the current knowledge base, build on prior research, contribute to practice

enhancements, inform policy, improve science, and contribute to the continued expansion of knowledge about the familial and systemic aspects of successful adoptions.

The program or project to be evaluated and research focus of the evaluation must be of sufficient scope and magnitude to merit intensive investigation. The evaluation focus should have national scope, and the findings from the evaluation should have a high probability of significantly advancing theory, policy and evidence-based practice in the field. Therefore, the program or project to be evaluated must have a sufficient number of subjects (e.g., children, families, social service providers, case workers, and supervisors) to sustain a rigorous, methodologically sound evaluation plan.

Programs or projects that are the focus of the proposed evaluation must be described clearly and in detail in the application. This description should include an explanation of the linkages among the characteristics and service needs of the target population, program or project services provided, and expected outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to include a logic model in the form of a schematic diagram, chart or other visual design that displays these linkages. Additionally, the conceptual, research, evaluation and/or practice basis underpinning the structure, operations, components or strategies used by the program or project should be explained.

Community-based organizations and agencies that do not have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective, large-scale evaluation are advised to propose contracting with a third-party evaluator specializing in social science and evaluation, or a university or college to conduct the evaluation.

Overview of Minimum Requirements for the Evaluation Design: In the narrative section of the application, applicants are expected to describe the objectives, background, significance and methodology for the proposed evaluation research. Applicants are advised to review carefully the application evaluation criteria specified in this program announcement and to structure their responses accordingly.

Objectives. The applicant is advised to describe clearly and succinctly the focus of the evaluation, the specific objectives of the proposed evaluation, and the research questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested.

Background and Significance. The following topics pertaining to the background and significance of the proposed evaluation should be discussed in the project narrative:

- (a) Description of the significant features and components of the program to be evaluated, including its goals and objectives, history, characteristics of the client population, geographic location, context, and services provided;
- (b) Current state of knowledge related to the evaluation focus, including a review of the relevant, current literature and any pilot tests;
- (c) Need for the proposed evaluation as either a new study to fill in a knowledge gap or a study of a program in a new site, replicating an existing program, to test the program under new conditions and validate existing knowledge or beliefs about the program;

- (d) Conceptual framework or logic model that structures the proposed evaluation and explains the linkages among the target population, program or project services and expected outcomes and the research and evaluation questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested; and
- (e) How the findings from the proposed study will significantly inform policy, improve practice, and/or advance the science of adoption research.

Applicants are expected to include all bibliographic references.

Methodology. The methodology section of the project narrative should include the following components, as appropriate:

- (a) Proposed evaluation design, including definitions of terms and variables;
- (b) Population and sampling plan, including the rationale, and strengths and potential limitations for interpretations of findings due to the gender and/or ethnic composition of the proposed sample;
- (c) Use of comparison or control groups and the rationale for selecting these groups,
- (d) Recruitment and retention procedures, including realistic estimates of attrition, and a discussion of appropriate procedures for handling attrition or interpreting the findings of the evaluation in light of attrition;
- (e) Types of qualitative and quantitative data to be collected;
- (f) Data collection procedures and instruments, including information on reliability and validity of the instruments with the population proposed;
- (g) Access to the data sources (e.g., project files, staff, project clients); and
- (h) Data analysis plan appropriate to the study.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

If appropriate, applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memoranda of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

- (1) project goals and objectives; (2) conceptual framework and review of the literature; and

(3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners and policymakers in the fields of adoption and child welfare.

Project Goals and Objectives (8 Points)

Applicants are expected to clearly and succinctly describe the focus of the proposed evaluation, the specific objectives of the study, and the research questions or hypotheses to be tested in the evaluation. They should also discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the conduct of the evaluation. Details should be provided in the Approach section.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the Adoption Opportunities legislation and explains how the proposed project evaluation will contribute to achieving these legislative goals (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant provides a clear and succinct description of the significant features and components of the program or project that is the focus of the evaluation, including its goals and objectives, history, characteristics of the client population, geographic location, context, and services provided (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the objectives of the proposed evaluation are clearly described (2 Points); and
- (4) Extent to which the research and evaluation questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested are clear, concise, appropriate and well-formulated (2 Points).

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework (8 Points)

Applicants are required to present a review of the current or seminal literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices pertaining to the issue.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a coherent and cohesive conceptual framework or logic model that structures the proposed evaluation and explains the linkages among the program or project services and outcomes and the research and evaluation questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the literature pertaining to the focus of the research, including any pilot tests (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives and evaluation research in the field of adoption and specifies how the proposed research would build on or differ from this work (2 Points).

Significance (9 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed evaluation is likely to contribute to advancement in the field of adoption by validating existing knowledge or addressing a significant gap in current knowledge (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed evaluation is likely to yield findings or results that will expand the current knowledge base, build on prior research, contribute to practice enhancements, inform policy, improve science, or provide insights into familial and systemic aspects of successful adoption (3 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the findings from the proposed evaluation will contribute to and promote evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional research in the field (3 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (50 Points)

The description of the program should include an explanation of the linkages among the characteristics and service needs of the target population, program or project services provided, and expected outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to include a logic model in the form of a schematic diagram, chart or other visual design that displays these linkages. Additionally, the conceptual, research, evaluation and/or practice basis underpinning the structure, operations, components or strategies used by the program or project should be explained.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the proposed evaluation and provide details on how the research design will be implemented. The application should also describe the relationship between this project and any other federally assisted work planned, anticipated, or underway, by the applicant. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies and organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the program to be evaluated is described in sufficient detail, such that its purpose, services and operations are clear, including its goals and objectives, history, characteristics of the client population, geographic location, context, and services provided, distinctive features for components, and the linkages among the characteristics and service needs of the target population, program or project services provided, and expected outcomes (5 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the rationale for the overall design of the proposed evaluation is explained clearly and is appropriate to the program to be evaluated (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents a realistic assessment of the strengths and potential limitations for interpreting and generalizing from the findings (1 Point);

- (4) Extent to which the program merits evaluation (3 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the population and sampling plan and/or use of comparison or control groups is feasible, realistic and appropriate to the evaluation focus (3 Points),
- (6) Extent to which recruitment and retention procedures are explained clearly and are appropriate to proposed research (2 Points);
- (7) Extent to which the application presents realistic estimates of attrition and describes appropriate procedures for handling attrition or interpreting the findings of the study in light of attrition (2 Points);
- (8) Extent to which the research design incorporates multiple methods of evaluation and the types of qualitative and quantitative data to be collected are clearly described and are appropriate to the proposed evaluation (3 Points);
- (9) Extent to which data collection procedures and instruments are described clearly; issues pertaining to the reliability and validity of the instruments with the population are discussed; and the proposed procedures and instruments are appropriate to the intended evaluation (3 Points);
- (10) Extent to which the evaluation design presents a feasible, realistic and appropriate plan for obtaining access to the data sources (e.g., project files, staff, project clients) (5 Points);
- (11) Extent to which the data analysis plan is presented clearly, describes the rationale for use of various analytic techniques, and is appropriate to the proposed study (6 Points);
- (12) Extent to which the overall design of the evaluation is feasible, realistic, methodologically sound and appropriate to the topic to be addressed and the research focus (8 Points);
- (13) Extent to which the design on the application includes procedures for documenting evaluation activities and results are explained adequately and are appropriate to the proposed project (3 Points); and
- (14) Extent to which the application describes the products to be developed during the evaluation; clearly defines the intended audiences and explains how the project's products will be useful to these audiences; and explains how these products or materials will be disseminated (3 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with project evaluation; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining work relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any proposed consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure, including the management information system, to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a sound and feasible management plan for implementing the proposed evaluation. This section should detail how the evaluation will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. The role and responsibilities of the lead agency should be clearly defined and, if appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors and consultants.

Applicants are required to include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the evaluation fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates and accomplishments. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed evaluation on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director or principal investigator and other key project personnel (including consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, obtaining informed consent from participants, and protection of human subjects, if appropriate (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff have the requisite training, experience, and expertise to carry out the proposed evaluation on time, within budget, and with a

high degree of quality. Include information on staff experience in the fields of adoption and child welfare, and the research background and experience of the staff.

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director, principal investigator, key project staff and consultants have the necessary technical skill, knowledge, and evaluation experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, data collection, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to fulfill their assigned roles and functions. Include a complete, but brief discussion of relevant program, evaluation, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant (and partnering organizations, collectively) have experience in conducting research and/or evaluations in the fields of adoption and child welfare (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, data collection, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs, appropriately allocated across component areas and sufficient to accomplish the objectives. They should demonstrate that costs for the proposed project are reasonable and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and the anticipated results and benefits.

Applicants are expected to allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for a key staff person from the project to attend a 3-day grantees meeting in Washington, D.C., hosted by the Children's Bureau. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 36 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of each grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

Projects involving evaluations through secondary analysis of existing data may propose a shorter duration.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$100,000 per budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: The grantee must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. Therefore, a project requesting \$100,000 per budget period must include a match of at least \$11,111 per budget period. The non-Federal share may be cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that up to four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 75 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.652

2001B. Child Abuse and Neglect

Since 1974, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) [USC 5105] has funded discretionary research, evaluation and assistance activities designed to provide information needed to better protect children from abuse or neglect and to improve the well-being of abused or neglected children.

The research and demonstration projects support research on the causes, prevention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect; demonstration programs to identify the best means of preventing maltreatment and treating troubled families; and the development and implementation of training programs.

2001B.1 National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Any national, State, local, Tribal, public or private nonprofit agency or organization, including accredited colleges and universities, with demonstrated expertise in the field of child welfare and the prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

PURPOSE: To fund a cooperative agreement for a National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment (NRCCM) to provide technical assistance, training, and consultation directly on-site as well as through state-of-the-art communication and technology-based methods, to build the capacity of State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported child protective services (CPS) agencies to achieve the goals of safety, permanency and well-being for children and families in the child welfare system. The NRCCM will assist CPS agencies to address the purposes of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), and the Child and Family Service (CFS) Reviews, as they relate to the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The NRCCM will have a central role in helping States, Tribes, and other CPS agencies improve and strengthen child maltreatment prevention, intervention, and treatment services to achieve better outcomes for children and families. The focus and priorities for the work of the resource center will be directed at training and technical assistance (T/TA) needs that arise from the CFS Reviews (*Federal Register*, January 25, 2000, Volume 65, Number 16). The activities of the NRCCM shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Supporting States with T/TA in areas related to the CFS Reviews;
- (b) Assisting State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies in implementing the requirements of Federal laws that affect child welfare programming, specifically CAPTA and ASFA;
- (c) Coordinating activities with the other entities of the Children's Bureau's T/TA network to achieve efficient use of resources and effective services to States; and
- (d) Providing leadership in knowledge building in the field of child maltreatment consistent with Children's Bureau priorities and in collaboration with the Bureau.

NOTE: A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding Federal assistance in which substantial Federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of the Children's Bureau and the grantee prior to award. The Children's Bureau anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. The involvement and collaboration includes Children's Bureau review and approval of planning stages of the activities before implementation phases may begin; Children's Bureau involvement in the establishment of

policies and procedures that maximize open competition, and rigorous and impartial development, review and funding of subgrant or subcontract activities, if applicable; and Children's Bureau and recipient joint collaboration in the performance of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, information technology enhancements, training and technical assistance, publications or products, and evaluation). Close monitoring by the Children's Bureau of the requirements stated in this announcement that limit the grantee's discretion with respect to scope of services offered, organizational structure and management processes, coupled with close Children's Bureau monitoring during performance which may, in order to assure compliance with the intent of this funding, exceed those Federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Since 1974 the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) has been the centerpiece of Federal law that addresses child protective services. Historically, under CAPTA, training and technical assistance (T/TA) for State and local agencies has been and continues to be integral to building the capacity of those agencies to plan, improve, develop, and carry out programs and activities relating to the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The current CAPTA, as amended October 1996, clearly lays out in Sec.104(b) the mandate to provide technical assistance in these areas.

The Children's Bureau is carrying out a coordinated T/TA strategy to support States in the planning and implementation of the CFS Reviews. In addition, Section 1123A of the Social Security Act requires the Secretary to make technical assistance available to States, to the extent feasible, to enable them to develop and implement corrective action plans stemming from the CFS reviews. The Children's Bureau network of T/TA Resource Centers will give priority to those States requesting T/TA related to review process activities. In addition to responding to T/TA requests related to the reviews, the Children's Bureau expects the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment to assist State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies in implementing the requirements of Federal legislation that affects child welfare programming.

The current atmosphere of change and reform has brought a number of CPS issues to the fore. An effective T/TA strategy should not only analyze and respond to expressed needs, but also provide leadership to the field of child abuse and neglect through knowledge building, seeking out and disseminating evidence-based practices, and providing a forum for discussion of emerging issues in child protection. Some of these issues will come directly from the CFS Review process, as common concerns and trends surface from the States. The NRCCM is expected to identify others through various additional activities, not limited to those described below.

EVALUATION: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application under this priority area. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

The grantee will design and implement a national resource center for providing T/TA and consultation onsite as well as through state-of-the-art communication and technology-based techniques to State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies. This T/TA and consultation should help to build capacity among these agencies to achieve the goals of safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. Applicants must also show an understanding of the issues specific to CAPTA, ASFA, and the CFS Reviews, as they relate to the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

- (1) program goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature and conceptual framework; and (3) significance.

Project Goals and Objectives (12 Points)

Applicants should present a vision of the T/TA system they anticipate developing, beginning with a statement of the goals and objectives of the project. Applicants should also discuss broad contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the implementation of the project. (Details should be provided in the Approach section.)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant understands the goals and objectives of the CAPTA, ASFA, and the CFS Reviews and how the proposed NRCCM will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the T/TA needs and issues of State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies as they relate to current CPS practices. Applicants should identify the types of agencies to be served by the NRCCM; describe the needs of the agencies; and describe the availability of services that currently assist these agencies (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant describes how the proposed approach for the NRCCM is unique and will contribute to the T/TA responsiveness of the Children's Bureau, and support State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies in the CFS Review process (2 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the applicant identifies the specific results or benefits that can be derived from the NRCCM and link these to safety, permanency, and well-being of children (1 Point);
- (5) Extent to which the applicant describes the methods/procedures used to determine whether the NRCCM has achieved the stated objectives (1 Point);
- (6) Extent to which the proposed NRCCM will build capacity of State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies to provide, improve, or expand services (1 Point);

- (7) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear and concise vision of services for State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies (1 Point); and
- (8) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the challenges, in terms of both opportunities and barriers, to designing and implementing the NRCCM (1 Point). (Describe strategies for addressing these challenges in the Approach section.)

Review of the Literature (6 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the relevant literature and evidence-based approaches regarding the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in the field and how the approach proposed would incorporate and disseminate new knowledge/strategies learned from this work (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates awareness of current initiatives in training, adult education, distance-learning, and provision of technical assistance (2 Points).

Significance (7 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed NRCCM is innovative and involves the demonstration of a coherent strategy, combining new and traditional ways to provide T/TA (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed NRCCM is likely to yield lessons learned that will benefit policy, practice, and theory development in the field of child maltreatment and support CPS agencies in the effective implementation of their programs, particularly as assessed by the CFS Reviews (3 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the products of the NRCCM (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) will be disseminated in ways that enable others to use the information or strategies (2 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (40 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a plan that: (1) reflects an understanding of the characteristics, needs and services currently available to State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies; (2) provides services that directly address the needs of the CPS agencies; (3) is grounded in theory and practice; (4) is appropriate and feasible; and (5) can be reliably evaluated.

This criterion consists of three topics that should be addressed in the application: (1) program design; (2) project services; and (3) evaluation.

Program Design (15 Points)

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable, as well as based on an understanding of the issues involved in providing T/TA to State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the design reflects evidence of the applicant's understanding of the outcomes and systemic factors that are assessed in the CFS Reviews, as they relate to issues of child maltreatment (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant describes the T/TA concepts and strategies that will be used to assist agencies in linking their policies and practices to outcomes for children and families (5 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the NRCCM's approach establishes effective partnerships with the other members of the Children's Bureau's T/TA network, the Regional Office staff, and Central Office staff (3 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the applicant cites factors that may accelerate or decelerate the pace of the work, and suggest ways of addressing these factors, including a description of strategies for prioritizing technical assistance requests and maximizing available financial resources (2 Points).

Project Services (15 Points)

Specific Evaluation Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which services to be provided by the proposed NRCCM are innovative, reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices, and support the mission of the Children's Bureau (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the NRCCM will continuously identify innovative and exemplary practices as well as relevant emerging issues in the field that call for new and different service approaches (4 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the NRCCM will identify needs, concerns, and new issues faced by State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies and implements technical assistance strategies to meet these needs, concerns, and issues (3 Points); and
- (4) Extent to which the NRCCM will address efforts to help agencies improve services to over-represented populations, particularly minority children in care and their families; identify strategies to assist agencies in improving the delivery of culturally appropriate services; and presents a discussion of how the NRCCM will assist agencies with relevant facets of cultural competence, including the ability of agencies to serve all families effectively, making appropriate placements, assessing the factors contributing to the over-representation of

minority children in the foster care system, and developing strategies to improve outcomes for minority families and children (4 Points).

Evaluation (10 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the NRCCM will assess the effectiveness of the T/TA and consultation services provided each year, including the relationship between assessed needs and service delivery (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant ensures that consumer participation is solicited in assessing the quality of services and satisfaction of T/TA recipients for services requested and provided (3 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, outcomes, and context of the proposed NRCCM and produce quantitative and qualitative outcome data to the extent possible (3 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (25 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed NRCCM. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership and other staff members; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining working relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure, including the management information system, to carry out the project.

Applicants are required to provide a plan that describes the responsibilities and time commitments of each project staff member. Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates and accomplishments. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

Applicants must provide a clear presentation of the management plan describing a sound and workable plan of action for implementing the proposed NRCCM. This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled.

If applicable, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants. The application must include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants also are required to present a reasonable and realistic schedule of activities, target dates, accomplishments, and deliverables. Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, grant management reports, and a final report. The application should also discuss factors that may affect NRCCM implementation or outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff, as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed NRCCM on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel (including consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed NRCCM (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which adequate and appropriate procedures are instituted to ensure feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the NRCCM (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant provides details of the knowledge, capabilities, and experience of the project director and other key staff in providing technical assistance and training to States in this priority area; include brief resumes of these staff, highlighting their experience and familiarity with the theory and practice of child abuse and neglect prevention, intervention, and treatment, as well as systemic issues (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, NRCCM services, evaluation, reporting, and dissemination of materials (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the Resource Center will establish and maintain a network of professionals in the field to serve as consultants (1 Point).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (15 Points)

If the applicant represents a consortium of partner agencies, describe the relevant background of each partner and the partner's experience in providing T/TA regarding child welfare. The application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting their assigned roles and functions, and each partner must provide a letter of commitment that authorizes the applicant to apply on behalf of the consortium. The applicant should also delineate the methods of coordinating with these entities, including proposed sub-grantee or consultant relationships and provide letters of commitment from agencies playing a key role in NRCCM activities.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the applicant provides details of the organization's capability and experience in providing technical assistance and training in the area of child abuse and neglect (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant describes past and current activities between the applicant and State, local, Tribal, and other publicly supported CPS agencies in providing T/TA in child maltreatment issues; describe how the proposed efforts will build on the existing partnerships with such agencies (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents a plan for working with the Children's Bureau to conduct at least one national conference/meeting on an annual basis; these conferences/meetings may be enhancements of established conferences/meetings sponsored by ACF (5 Points); and
- (4) Extent to which the applicant presents a description of the partners that will work with the applicant on the NRCCM (3 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs, appropriately allocated across component areas, and sufficient to accomplish the objectives. The dollar amount requested must be fully justified and documented in terms of the targeted population to be served. Discussion should refer to the budget information presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A and the applicant's budget justification.

The budget should include sufficient funds so that the NRCCM project director or designee can travel to Washington, D.C., for an annual conference. Attendance at this conference will be a requirement of the cooperative agreement.

Applicants under the priority area are encouraged to commit funds for a self-evaluation of the project. Budget justification should reflect sufficient funds for the evaluation, which should include a customer satisfaction component.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed NRCCM are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and are programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted, anticipated results, and benefits (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The cooperative agreement will be awarded for a project period not to exceed 36 months. The initial grant award will be awarded for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond the 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The grant amount will not exceed \$700,000 per year for 3 years. The dollar amount requested must be fully justified and documented.

MATCHING REQUIREMENT: None.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that one project will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 75 pages, including all appendices, budget forms, and attachments. Any pages over that number will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.670

2001B.2 Investigator Initiated Research Advancing the State of the Art in the Child Abuse and Neglect Field

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: State, local government, public and private nonprofit, community-based nonprofit organizations and universities with experience in the areas of child welfare and child maltreatment. Collaborative efforts and interdisciplinary applications are encouraged; however, a primary applicant must be identified.

PURPOSE: To support research designed to carry out the legislative responsibilities established by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended, October 3, 1996 (P.L. 104-235). These responsibilities include the conduct of research on the nature and scope of child abuse and neglect; the causes, prevention, assessment, identification, treatment, cultural and socioeconomic distinctions, and consequences of child abuse and neglect; and appropriate, effective and culturally sensitive investigative, administrative, and judicial procedures with respect to cases of child maltreatment.

As with other offerings, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families maintains its interest in research and evaluation that will be especially informative about over-represented populations and communities, and special populations (i.e., racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities or other special needs).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The generation of new knowledge for understanding critical issues in child abuse and neglect improves prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment for children and families. Research is one way to generate new knowledge. Field-initiated, or investigator-initiated, research may address any topic that will expand the current knowledge base, build on prior research, contribute to practice enhancements, inform policy, improve science, or provide insights into new approaches to the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child maltreatment (i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional maltreatment, and/or neglect). The Office of Child Abuse and Neglect of the Children's Bureau (OCAN/CB) is particularly interested in research pertaining to the prevention of child abuse and neglect, improvements in child protective services practice, and the evaluation of programs or projects measuring the effectiveness and efficacy of therapeutic interventions for child victims of maltreatment.

This priority area responds to legislative direction. Those seeking general guidance about appropriate topics are referred to the *Federal Register* (February 12, 1997; Vol. 62, No. 29, pp. 6546-6549) announcement of proposed research priorities which lists legislative and other topics of interest. Applicants may also consult the report, including research recommendations, published by the National Research Council, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Panel on Research on Child Abuse and Neglect, *Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect* (Washington D.C.: National Academy of Science Press, 1993).

Secondary analyses of existing databases, pilot tests of measurement tools, or validation studies may be proposed under this priority area. Smaller budgets and shorter project lengths for these more focused activities are acceptable when appropriate to the scope of the work. OCAN/CB encourages the use of existing data sets collected through OCAN and other ACYF funded projects such as the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS), the National Study of Protective, Preventive and Reunification Services, Head Start data and other field generated data on child maltreatment, and data stored at the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect located at Cornell University, Family Life Development Center, G20 MVR Hall, Ithaca, New York, 14853-4401; telephone: 607-255-7794.

Applicants are encouraged to plan and design, apply for funding, implement, and evaluate the proposed research in collaboration with a State IV-B agency, community-based organization (CBO), public, private, profit, or nonprofit agency providing child welfare or child protective services.

As with other offerings, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families maintains its interest in research that will be especially informative about over-represented populations and communities, and special populations (i.e., racial and ethnic groups, and children with disabilities or other special needs).

Overview of Minimum Requirements for Project Design: In the narrative section of the application, applicants are expected to describe the objectives, background, significance and methodology for the proposed research. Applicants are advised to review carefully the application evaluation criteria specified in this program announcement and structure their responses accordingly.

Objectives. The applicant is advised to describe clearly and succinctly the focus of the research, the specific objectives of the proposed study, and the questions or hypotheses to be tested.

Background and Significance. The following topics pertaining to the background and significance of the proposed research should be discussed in the project narrative:

- (1) Conceptual framework, including appropriate cultural perspectives and relevant theory, if any, in support of the study;
- (2) Current state of knowledge related to the research problem, including a review of the relevant literature and any pilot tests;
- (3) Direct application of the proposed research to the field of child abuse and neglect within the context of OCAN/CB's legislative responsibilities;
- (4) Need for the study as either a replication to validate existing knowledge or as a new study to fill a knowledge gap (if applicable, indicate how the proposed study is distinguished from other on-going research of which it is a part); and
- (5) How the findings from the proposed study will significantly inform policy, improve practice, and/or advance the science of child abuse and neglect research.

Applicants are also expected to include all bibliographic references.

Methodology. The methodology section of the project narrative should include the following components, as appropriate:

- (1) Proposed research design, including definitions of terms and variables;
- (2) Population and sampling plan, including the rationale, and strengths and potential limitations for interpretations of findings due to the gender and ethnic composition of the proposed study sample;
- (3) Recruitment and retention procedures, including realistic estimates of attrition, and a discussion of appropriate procedures for handling attrition or interpreting the findings of the study in light of attrition;
- (4) Data collection procedures and instruments, including information on reliability and validity of the instruments with the population proposed;
- (5) Access to the data source and the chosen data set; and

(6) Data analysis plan appropriate to the study.

NOTE: If the proposed research involves secondary analysis of existing data, then applicants are expected to demonstrate familiarity with the original study including its design, measures, reports, data file structures, variables, codes, and the strengths and limits of the data. Also, these applicants may run a preliminary descriptive analysis on existing variables of interest to replicate published findings, add new variables and revise data analysis plans as needed.

The Children's Bureau is committed to the process of secondary data analysis for the purpose of verification and extension of research findings. Therefore, applicants are required to agree to archive the dataset from this study with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect within 2 years of the termination of Federal funding for the project. The applicant's Institutional Review Board and research participants should be made aware that the data from the project will be archived and made available to other researchers after personal identifiers have been removed. Archiving will involve providing individual respondent data in electronic form and the accompanying documentation, including the codebook, the final report, and copies of the research instruments, as appropriate. A manual describing the guidelines of the Archive, *Depositing Data with the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect: A Handbook for Investigators*, is available from the Archive directly at the Family Life Development Center, MVR Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 (phone: 607-255-7799), from the Archive web site at www.ndacan.cornell.edu, or from the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (26 Points)

If appropriate, applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail the specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

(1) project goals and objectives; (2) conceptual framework and review of the literature; and (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners and policymakers in the fields of child abuse and neglect, child protective services and child welfare.

Project Goals and Objectives (8 Points)

Specific Review Criteria:

(1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, as amended, October 3, 1996 and explains how the proposed project will contribute to achieving these legislative goals (2 Points);

- (2) Extent to which the focus of the research and problem to be addressed are clearly and succinctly described (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the objectives of the proposed study are clearly described (2 Points); and
- (4) Extent to which the research questions or hypotheses to be tested are clear, concise, appropriate and well-formulated (2 Points).

Conceptual Framework and Review of the Literature (9 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a conceptual framework and discuss the relevant literature.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a coherent and cohesive conceptual framework for the proposed research, including appropriate cultural perspectives, and references theory, if any, in support of the study (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the current literature pertaining to the focus of the research, including any pilot tests (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in the field of child abuse and neglect and specifies how the proposed research would build on or differ from these initiatives (3 Points).

Significance (9 Points)

Applicants are expected to describe the need for the proposed research and indicate how the findings from the study will significantly inform policy, improve practice, and/or advance the science of child abuse and neglect research. This description should also explain how the proposed research is directly applicable to the field of child abuse and neglect within the context of OCAN's legislative responsibilities.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed research will serve to contribute to advancement in the field of child abuse and neglect by validating existing knowledge or addressing a significant gap in current knowledge (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed research is likely to yield findings or results that will expand the current knowledge base, build on prior research, contribute to practice enhancements, inform policy, improve science, or provide insights into new approaches to the prevention, assessment, identification, and treatment of child maltreatment (3 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the findings from the proposed research will contribute to and promote research, evaluation and evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional research in the field (3 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (50 Points)

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the project and provide details on how the proposed project will be accomplished. The application should also describe the relationship between this project and any other federally assisted work planned, anticipated, or underway, by the applicant. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies and organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Applicants are expected to present a clear, detailed, and methodologically sound research design that includes procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure and analytic framework. The design should include, as appropriate, definitions of terms and variables, a population and sampling plan, recruitment and retention procedures, data collection procedures and instruments, access to the data source and chosen data set, and data analysis plan.

Applicants are required to describe the products that will be developed during the implementation of the proposed project. Products may include questionnaires, interview guides and other data collection instruments, software designed for the proposed project, Internet applications (i.e., web postings), technical reports, journal articles, and a final report describing the target population, issues addressed, project design, implementation, outcomes and the results of the evaluation. Applicants should discuss the intended audiences for these products (e.g., the Training and Technical Assistance Network sponsored by the Children's Bureau, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners) and present a dissemination plan specifying the venues for conveying the information.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the population and sampling plan is feasible, realistic and appropriate, and includes a consideration of the rationale for the plan and a discussion of the strengths and potential limitations for interpretation of findings (9 Points);
- (2) Extent to which recruitment and retention procedures are explained clearly and are appropriate to proposed research (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the application presents realistic estimates of attrition and describes appropriate procedures for handling attrition or interpreting the findings of the study in light of attrition (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which data collection procedures and instruments are described clearly; issues pertaining to the reliability and validity of the instruments with the population are discussed; and the proposed procedures and instruments are appropriate to the intended research (3 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the research design presents a feasible, realistic and appropriate plan for obtaining access to the data sources and the chosen data set (7 Points);

- (6) Extent to which the data analysis plan is presented clearly, describes the rationale for use of various analytic techniques, and is appropriate to the proposed study (9 Points);
- (7) Extent to which the overall design of the proposed research is feasible, realistic, methodologically sound and appropriate to the topic to be addressed and the research focus (8 Points);
- (8) Extent to which procedures for quality control, on-going documentation of project activities, and results are explained adequately and are appropriate to the proposed research (3 Points); and
- (9) Extent to which the application describes the products to be developed during the project; clearly defines the intended audiences, explains how the project's products will be useful to these audiences, and explains how these products or materials will be disseminated (5 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (17 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining working relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure, including the management information system, to carry out the project.

Grantees under this program announcement, who are doing secondary analysis, are required to share draft reports of their findings from these analyses of existing data with the original investigators or other experts for comments.

All grantees are also required to develop a carefully prepared and thoroughly documented data set comprising the research data used for the study and submit it to the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect within 2 years of the termination of funding for the project. Furthermore, grantees conducting research funded under this initiative are expected to be sensitive to ethical issues that may arise and are required to make provision for reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect as governed by applicable State laws, regulations, and professional codes of conduct.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (8 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a sound and feasible management plan for implementing the proposed project. This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. The role and responsibilities of the lead applicant should be clearly defined and, if appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by all partners, subcontractors and consultants.

Applicants are required to include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates and accomplishments. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

All research applicants other than those doing secondary analyses are required to provide Certification of Protection of Human Subjects Assurance as part of the application. As part of the management plan, if applicable, applicants are required to describe procedures for soliciting approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and describe a data management plan to safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of data.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead applicant are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel (including consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all ACYF regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, obtaining informed consent from participants, and protection of human subjects (3 Points).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff have the requisite training, experience, and expertise to carry out the proposed project on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. Include information on staff experience in the fields of child welfare, abuse and neglect and describe the research background and experience of the staff.

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed principal investigator, key project staff and consultants have the necessary technical skill, knowledge and research experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program services, data processing and analysis, evaluation, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (4 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to fulfill their assigned roles and functions. Include a complete, but brief discussion of relevant program, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant and partnering organizations collectively have experience in conducting research in the fields of child welfare, and child abuse and neglect (2 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data processing and analysis, evaluation, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (7 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs, appropriately allocated across component areas, sufficient to accomplish the project objectives and commensurate with the scope and complexity of the proposed research.

Applicants are expected to allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for a key staff person from the project to attend a 3-day annual meeting of OCAN research grantees in Washington, D.C. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results (4 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 36 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of each grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

Projects involving secondary analysis of existing data may propose a shorter duration.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is up to \$250,000 per budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: There is no matching requirement.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that up to four projects will be funded at the maximum funding level or more than four if applications for lesser amounts are funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 75 pages, including all forms and attachments. All pages over that limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.670

2001B.3: Field-Initiated Demonstration Projects Advancing the State of the Art in the Child Abuse and Neglect Field

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: States, local government entities, public and private nonprofit, community-based nonprofit organizations and universities with experience in the areas of child welfare and child maltreatment. Collaborative efforts and interdisciplinary applications are encouraged; however, a primary applicant must be identified.

PURPOSE: To support demonstration projects designed to carry out the legislative responsibilities established by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended, October 3, 1996 (P.L. 104-235). Grants awarded under this priority will support continuous innovation and improvement in the quality of services provided to child victims of maltreatment and their families on topics identified by the field as cutting edge or to test new solutions to continuing problems. Topics potentially of interest to the Children's Bureau include but are not limited to: (1) services provided by community-based organizations and agencies, including after school and out-of-school care, (2) prevention of child abuse and neglect (including in foster care and/or recurrence in the home), (3) service and treatment provisions for child victims and families, with a consideration of culturally competent practice, and (4) assessment of services and treatment outcomes pertaining to the efficacy and effectiveness of therapeutic interventions for maltreated children.

The Children's Bureau is particularly interested in testing demonstrations that shift traditionally home-based activities into a group setting to assess the efficacy of therapeutic group work with parents of children at risk of child maltreatment, suspected of maltreatment, or with a history of

child maltreatment. Specifically, family support studies, modeled on the concept of therapeutic community group services in social work practice, suggest that providing professionally led parent training or parent education activities or other services in settings that allow for peer support and peer interaction can produce positive change. Positive outcomes are evidenced in the cognitive behavior of children and parent attitudes and knowledge about parenting. Although the findings from these studies are preliminary, the results for group therapies are promising.

Demonstration projects supported under this priority are expected to be major contributors of models or components of models for service providers and for outreach projects. A model demonstration project must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or, replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- (b) Determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies using multiple measures of results; and
- (c) Produce detailed procedures and materials, based on the evaluation, that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices and programs that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: While results of previously funded projects have expanded knowledge about child abuse and neglect, improved practice, and provided data for policy formation and decisionmaking, knowledge has not advanced at a uniform rate across all areas of interest. At the same time, new problems, challenges, complexities, and dilemmas arise. This priority area provides an opportunity for applicants to contribute to the continued expansion of knowledge about the familial and systemic aspects of child abuse and neglect. Projects funded under this initiative should be highly innovative and demonstrate contributions to improving safety, permanency, and well-being for children, with special emphasis on prevention, the provision of services or treatment.

As with other offerings, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families maintains an interest in projects that will be especially informative about over-represented populations and communities, and special populations (i.e., racial and ethnic groups, and children with disabilities or other special needs).

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application under this priority area. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

Applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

- (1) program goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature and conceptual framework; and
- (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners and policymakers in the fields of child maltreatment and child welfare.

Project Goals and Objectives (7 Points)

Applicants must describe the context of the proposed demonstration project, including the geographic location, environment, magnitude and severity of the problem and the needs to be addressed. The description should present the strengths and weakness of current services and the gaps in service provided by the applicant and other agencies (in the location) or other topics or issues to be addressed by the project. It should also include key socioeconomic and demographic information on the target populations and the anticipated number of clients (e.g., individuals and families) to be served.

Applicants are expected to present a vision of the service systems they anticipate developing and compare them to existing systems. They should present a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the proposed project and discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the implementation of the project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the CAPTA legislation and national outcomes initiatives and how the proposed project will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the characteristics of the target population, the service needs of this population and community, and the status of existing services for children, adolescents and their families/caregivers (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes the benefits that clients will derive, the anticipated number of clients (e.g., individuals and families) to be served and the basis for these estimates (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the applicant presents a plan for building local capacity to provide services to children, adolescents and their families/caregivers and sustaining the program after Federal funding has ceased (1 Point); and
- (5) Extent to which the applicant presents a clear vision of the service system for the target population, including a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the proposed project (1 Point).

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework (10 Points)

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the relevant literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices pertaining to the proposed demonstration project (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in the field and how the proposed approach will build on or differ from this work (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant provides a cohesive conceptual framework or logic model that is evidence based (supported by theory, research, evaluation data and best practices), structures the proposed program, and explains the linkages between and among proposed demonstration activities and outcomes (5 Points).

Significance (8 Points)

Applicants should explain how the proposed demonstration project is innovative and will contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field. This section should include an overview of: (1) how the proposed project will produce results that will benefit clients and be useful to agencies addressing the same or similar problems; (2) a method of documentation of project components and strategies such that the successful elements of the approach may be replicated in various settings; and (3) project products and a plan for dissemination of the products and findings. (Details are to be provided in the Approach section.)

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project, if successfully implemented and evaluated, is likely to yield findings or results that will contribute to and promote evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional research in the field (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed project or strategies, as appropriate, could be replicated by other agencies addressing the same or similar problems, and could have the potential for implementation in other settings (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the findings, results, and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) will be packaged and disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information and strategies to implement evidence-based practice improvements (2 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (53 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a plan that: (1) reflects an understanding of the characteristics, needs and services currently available to the target population; (2) provides services that directly address the needs of the target population; (3) is evidence based and grounded in theory and

practice; (4) is appropriate and feasible; (5) can be reliably evaluated; and (6) if successfully implemented, can be sustained after Federal funding has ceased.

This criterion consists of four topics that should be addressed in the application: (1) program design; (2) project services; (3) evaluation; and (4) product development and dissemination.

Program Design (16 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to define goals and specific, measurable objectives for the project. Goals and objectives should not be confused. Goals are the end product of an effective project. Objectives are measurable steps for reaching goals.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the project and provide details on how the proposed project will be accomplished. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies or organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Applicants are expected to present a project design that includes detailed procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation. Applicants must also describe how and what data will be collected on individuals and families; types of services provided; services used; and types and nature of needs identified and met.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which goals, objectives and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable, as well as based on an understanding of the characteristics of the clients and the context of the intervention (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the design of the proposed project is evidence based and reflects up-to-date knowledge from the research and effective practices literature(3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the design is feasible and appropriate to address the needs of the target population (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed design describes procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation (3 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the proposed project will establish and coordinate linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations on the local, State or Federal level providing services to the target population (2 Points); and
- (6) Extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance (2 Points).

Project Services (20 Points)

Applicants are required to provide a detailed description of the services to be provided by the program and how these services will bridge gaps or substantially improve the current service-delivery system and benefit the target population.

Specific Evaluation Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project is evidence based and will build on current theory, research, evaluation data and best practices to contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed project is innovative and involves the demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed services are comprehensive in scope and will address a broad range of the target population's needs (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed services involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of service delivery (2 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the services to be provided will be beneficial to the intended recipients and the target community (7 Points).

Evaluation (12 Points)

Applicants are required to describe how the proposed project will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives. It is anticipated that the evaluation strategy will include process and outcome analyses and include both qualitative and quantitative components.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for assessing the effectiveness of project strategies and the implementation process (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative outcome data (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of program progress and a basis for program adjustments (2 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive and appropriate to the goals, objectives and context of the proposed project (3 Points); and

- (5) Extent to which the evaluation plan is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies, and contribute to, promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings (2 Points).

Product Development and Dissemination Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are required to describe the products that will be developed during the proposed project. Products may include questionnaires, interview guides and other data collection instruments, software designed for the proposed project, Internet applications (i.e., web postings), technical reports, journal articles, and a final report describing the target population, issues addressed, project design, implementation, outcomes and the results of the evaluation. Applicants should discuss the intended audiences for these products (e.g., researchers, policymakers, and practitioners) and present a dissemination plan specifying the venues for conveying the information.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the products to be developed during the project are described clearly and will address the goal of dissemination of information to support evidence-based improvements of practices in the field (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the application clearly defines the intended audiences and explains how the project's products will be useful to these audiences (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for developing these products, and provides a dissemination plan that is appropriate to each of these audiences (1 Point).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining work among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure, including its management information system, to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a sound and feasible management plan for implementing the proposed project. This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. The role and responsibilities of the lead applicant should be clearly defined.

Applicants should include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the applicant along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution. If applicable, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, or consultants.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates, accomplishments and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff, as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined, and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, and obtaining informed consent from participants (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff have the requisite training, experience, and expertise to carry out the proposed project on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. Include information on staff experience working with child welfare populations and, as appropriate, describe the research or practice background and experience of the staff.

Applicants are required to present brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions in the project narrative. Resumes must indicate what position the individual will fill and position descriptions must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director, key project staff, and consultants have the necessary technical skill, knowledge and experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points); and

- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur.

If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Applicants should also describe their history and relationship with the targeted community. Include a complete, but brief discussion of relevant program, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the applicant organization and partnering organizations collectively have experience in developing and implementing innovative projects, programs, or service delivery systems in the child maltreatment or child welfare field (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (7 Points)

Applicants are required to allocate 20 percent of the proposed budget to evaluation activities. The proposed budget should include sufficient funding to cover travel expenses for a key person from the project and the evaluator to attend an annual 3-day grantees meeting in the Washington, D.C., area hosted by the Children's Bureau. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results and benefits (5 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (2 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 48 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding

beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of each grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$250,000 per budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: There is no matching requirement.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 75 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.670

2001B.4 Quality Improvement Centers on Child Protective Services

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Public or private nonprofit agencies, organizations, and institutions of higher learning, alone or in partnerships with child welfare agencies. The Children's Bureau especially encourages partnerships between public agencies and private nonprofit agencies, universities and foundations with experience in child maltreatment issues.

PURPOSE: To award up to four cooperative agreements to test the feasibility of funding the creation of centers focused on increasing the capabilities and capacities of organizations within defined geographic areas to assess needs and resources and to plan and implement, in a consortium-type collaboration, research and demonstration activities to improve the Child Protective Services (CPS) system. Each Quality Improvement Center (QIC) will be awarded funds for planning and implementation phases. At the end of the planning period, each QIC will have identified a single topic or focus for its activities. During the implementation phase, each QIC will be expected to sponsor, monitor and evaluate research or demonstration projects that test models or hypotheses at multiple sites. Each QIC will also provide technical assistance to local grantees funded under this initiative.

NOTE: A cooperative agreement is a specific method of awarding Federal assistance in which substantial Federal involvement is anticipated. A cooperative agreement clearly defines the respective responsibilities of the Children's Bureau and the grantee prior to award. The Children's Bureau anticipates that agency involvement will produce programmatic benefits to the recipient otherwise unavailable to them for carrying out the project. The involvement and collaboration includes Children's Bureau review and approval of planning stages of the activities before implementation phases may begin; Children's Bureau involvement in the establishment of policies and procedures that maximize open competition, and rigorous and impartial development, review and funding of subgrant or subcontract activities, if applicable; and Children's Bureau and recipient joint collaboration in the performance of key programmatic activities (i.e., strategic planning, implementation, information technology enhancements,

training and technical assistance, publications or products, and evaluation). Close monitoring by the Children's Bureau of the requirements stated in this announcement that limit the grantee's discretion with respect to scope of services offered, organizational structure and management processes, coupled with close Children's Bureau monitoring during performance which may, in order to assure compliance with the intent of this funding, exceed those Federal stewardship responsibilities customary for grant activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Child Protective Services

The responsibility for receiving and investigating reports of child maltreatment falls primarily on a system of CPS units within State and local child welfare agencies. CPS units represent the front-end of the child welfare system, because the majority of the children receiving child welfare services (such as foster care) first come to the attention of the system through CPS. CPS agencies have five core functions: conduct intake, assess child and family needs, investigate reports of child abuse and/or neglect, provide short-term services, and refer for on-going services. The General Accounting Office (GAO) in a report titled *Child Protective Services: Complex Challenges Require New Strategies* (GAO/HEHS-97-115, July 1997) stated that the "CPS system is in crisis, plagued by difficult problems, such as growing caseloads, increasingly complex social problems underlying child maltreatment, and ongoing system weaknesses in day-to-day operations." Several States and localities have responded to the crisis by experimenting with new strategies for service delivery to cope with rising and complex caseloads; however, the GAO concluded that there is little or no research to assess whether these new strategies effectively solve the problems of abused and neglected children and their families.

The Children's Bureau is interested in QIC-funded demonstration projects addressing issues that are integral to developing new CPS strategies including, but not limited to, determining appropriate levels of risk and child safety, ways to build and sustain community partnerships, and appropriate outcome measures by which to gauge the effectiveness of reform efforts. Topics of QIC-sponsored demonstration projects may pertain to methods of improving the casework functions of engagement, assessment, case planning and service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and case closure. Additional topics include administrative and management changes related to caseloads, supervisory practices, professional support, accountability, time frames for decisionmaking and decisionmaking processes, staffing qualifications, recruitment, training and retention, and relationships with the courts.

Another topic of interest was suggested by several studies, including the GAO report and the Children's Bureau resource guide, *Rethinking Child Welfare Practice Under the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997* (November 2000), that emphasize the importance of strengthening the link between child welfare agencies and local communities by forming collaborative CPS and community partnerships to develop community-based strategies. A community-partnership orientation may include planning and implementation of case plans that are undertaken in partnership with staff and agencies from different systems who together make a formal commitment to provide the services and supports the child and family need.

Roles and Responsibilities of Quality Improvement Centers

Quality Improvement Centers are expected to perform the following functions:

- (a) Increase the capabilities of agencies in identified geographical areas to improve frontline CPS practices;
- (b) Foster the development of collaborative partnerships on the local and regional level;
- (c) Promote collaborative problem solving;
- (d) Develop and implement research and demonstration projects to promote innovation, evidence-based practice improvements, and advancement of knowledge;
- (e) Establish an information-sharing network to disseminate information on promising practices; and
- (f) Improve the quality and availability of CPS delivery systems in a specified geographic area.

It must be emphasized that the QICs will not assume training, technical assistance and information dissemination functions and responsibilities currently performed by the ten National Resource Centers, two Clearinghouses and four technical support projects operated by the Children's Bureau. Additionally, in fiscal year 2000, the Children's Bureau funded several Child Welfare Training Projects to develop training on these topics. Therefore, the QICs will neither develop training curriculum nor provide training to State or local CPS or other child welfare supervisory staff or caseworkers on methods for improving the quality of frontline CPS or other child welfare practices.

The distinctive function of the QICs that separates them from other support resources provided by the Children's Bureau is that the QICs will serve as a mechanism for announcing and disbursing grant funding to community-based organizations and other agencies and institutions within their region to conduct research and demonstration projects. Each QIC will also monitor and evaluate these research or demonstration projects and provide technical assistance and support to these local grantees.

Research and demonstration projects sponsored by the QICs under this initiative must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based model or innovative improvement to the frontline CPS delivery system with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data;
- (b) Conduct an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies using multiple measures of results; and
- (c) Produce detailed procedures and materials, based on the evaluation, that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices and programs that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.

Specific Tasks to be Performed by the Quality Improvement Centers During the Planning and Implementation Phases

Applicants are required to submit a design that clearly and concisely describes a strategy for a 12-month planning phase (Phase I) for the development of the QIC to be followed by a 48-month implementation phase (Phase II). In Phase II, the QIC will announce, award, monitor and evaluate 36-month, research and demonstration project grants in their region. Each QIC will also provide technical assistance to local grantees funded under this initiative.

A national evaluation of the operations of the QICs will be sponsored by the Children's Bureau and conducted by a third-party evaluator. The QICs will be required to cooperate fully with this and any other evaluation requested by the Children's Bureau. The QICs will also be required to conduct an evaluation of the research and demonstration projects they sponsor.

TRAVEL FOR CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS: Approximately 12 weeks after the award of the 12-month planning phase of the cooperative agreement, the project director of each QIC will be required to attend a 2-day conference in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Children's Bureau for QIC awardees funded under this priority area.

Additionally, 10 months after the award of the 12-month planning cooperative agreements, QIC awardees will be required to make an oral presentation to the Children's Bureau staff in Washington, D.C., to describe and defend their plan for the Phase II-Version A implementation (described below). Applicants are advised to propose sending three project staff to make the presentation—the project director, a member of the Regional Advisory Group, and one other representative (consultant, community representative, or potential consortium member).

The budget for the 12-month planning grant should include funding for these three meetings in Washington D.C.: the project director's meeting at approximately week 12, the three-person presentation meeting at month 10, and two key staff persons to the Children's Bureau annual grantees meeting, usually held in the spring. In each of the four implementation years, QIC awardees will be expected to send only the project director and the evaluator to the annual grantee meeting.

GEOGRAPHIC REGION: As part of the project narrative, applicants are required to describe the specific geographic region that will be served by the QIC. This section should include a justification for the selection of the region, including why this configuration is optimal based on, for example, geographic size, population density, the size and seriousness of the needs of the target population, resources available and strengths and weaknesses of the CPS system on the regional and local level.

Applicants are advised, but not required, to propose a regional configuration consisting of contiguous States or counties. If a different configuration is proposed, then the rationale for that design must be justified in detail.

TOPIC FOCUS OF THE QIC: Applicants, as part of the application process, are not required to identify a topic or service population that will be the single focus of the QIC. Rather, they are encouraged to describe the context within which the QIC will operate and the procedures for selecting that focus, as outlined below. They should include a description of the characteristics of

the children and families brought to the attention of CPS in the proposed region and case processing and disposition; barriers to the effective delivery of frontline services in the proposed region; and regional, State and local resources including gaps in services at these levels. Successful applicants will be expected to select the topic focus during the planning process, based on a needs assessment of the region and input from a number of sources, including a Regional Advisory Group. (Details about the composition of the Regional Advisory Group are provided throughout this priority area description.)

Plan for Phase I (Planning)

Although applicants will be accorded considerable flexibility in developing a strategy tailored to the needs and resources of their proposed region, it is anticipated that applications for the first year of funding must present a method for completing the following tasks during Phase I:

- (a) Form a Regional Advisory Group that will set goals and objectives for the QIC; select the focus for the QIC; define research, policy and practice issues pertaining to the topic; develop a work plan and timetable for development of the Phase II implementation plan; develop the Phase II implementation plan; and provide oversight of plans and activities conducted under this funding. The Children's Bureau anticipates that the Regional Advisory Group will consist of five to eight members.
- (b) Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the region that describes and evaluates the effectiveness of current CPS delivery systems, and identifies service gaps and other barriers (e.g., legal, cultural, administrative) to the effective delivery of these services. This assessment should include, but not be limited to, the collection and analysis of data on the following factors, as appropriate:
 - Demographic characteristics of the children and families brought to the attention of CPS in the region and the disposition of these cases (e.g., investigated, referred to social services, or referred to court);
 - Availability of agencies and community-based organizations that can provide services (including drug/alcohol and mental health treatment facilities and programs) for families involved in the CPS and child welfare systems;
 - Legal, administrative, court, social service, financial and other barriers to the effective delivery of frontline child protective services;
 - Strengths and weaknesses of current CPS practices in the region pertaining to engagement, assessment, case planning and service delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and case closure;
 - Agencies on the regional, State and local level that are engaged in addressing similar or relevant issues pertaining to child abuse and neglect and child protective service systems;
 - Availability of resources on the regional, State and local level; and

- Gaps in resources on the regional, State and local level.

In developing a strategy for conducting the needs assessment, applicants are advised to propose methods that do not require respondents to complete written surveys or questionnaires, because these surveys will require prior approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The OMB approval process takes approximately 5–6 months. Methods that do not require prior OMB approval include conference calls, focus groups, and unstructured telephone or in-person interviews.

- (c) Select a focus for the QIC in conjunction with the Regional Advisory Group and input from key regional, State, and local agencies and organizations. The focus should reflect the findings from the regional needs assessment;
- (d) Conduct a literature review that provides a comprehensive analysis of the research and promising practices nationally and regionally on the topic selected, including cultural, financial, legal, bureaucratic and other barriers to the effective delivery of frontline child protective services;

In the implementation phase (Phase II), the topic selected will be the focus of 3 years of research/demonstration projects conducted in the region. Therefore, the topic has to be of sufficient scope and magnitude to merit intensive investigation. The topic selected should have national scope, and the findings from the research and demonstration projects sponsored by the QIC should have a high probability of significantly advancing theory, policy and evidence-based practice in the field. Additionally, and as explained below, the research and demonstration projects implemented in Phase II should be designed to evaluate multiple approaches and/or multisite interventions on the selected focus topic. This strategy dictates that the number of subjects (e.g., children, families, social service providers, case workers, supervisors) be large enough to sustain a rigorous, methodologically sound implementation and evaluation plan.

Because the QIC initiative is funded through a cooperative agreement, the topic selected will be subject to final approval by the Children’s Bureau.

Plan for Phase II-Version A: Implementation

In Phase I, each QIC, in conjunction with the Regional Advisory Group, will be required to develop and submit a Phase II-Version A plan for announcing and awarding research and demonstration grants to local sites in their region, and monitoring and evaluating these projects. These plans are expected to build on knowledge gained from a review of the literature and promising practices in the field, the results from the regional needs assessment, and input from other sources.

Applicants are required to submit a preliminary design for Phase II-Version A in this application that presents a clear and comprehensive vision of how the proposed QIC would operate. Applicants are expected to describe the approach and processes that will be used to develop the implementation plan, and address anticipated logistical and administrative issues. The Phase II-Version A plan will be due 9 months after the award of the cooperative agreement and must include, but not be limited to, the following components:

1. Comprehensive review of the literature developed during the planning phase (Phase I);
2. Conceptual framework or logic model describing the linkages between and among the (a) attributes of the populations, problems, conditions, and systems that are the target of the interventions; (b) strategies; (c) resources; (d) traditional and innovative services/strategies to be provided; and (e) short- and long-term outcomes;
3. Administrative structure for announcing the availability of funding, and reviewing and awarding local grants, including program description, eligibility, funding levels, application evaluation criteria and selection process;
4. Because QICs are designed to attract interest and elicit support from agencies and organizations within the region that may have little experience with research, evaluation and the grant award process, the QICs will be required to provide technical assistance to prospective local grantees to assist them in designing initiatives that meet the standards for research and demonstration projects funded under this initiative. The design of these projects must be evidence-based with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data. They must also pertain to issues of national scope and incorporate logic models and an evaluation framework.

At a minimum, technical assistance provided by the QICs to prospective local grantees should consist of instructions and materials providing information on grant application requirements, suitable grant topics, the role of partnerships and collaborations, program and research designs, data sources and data collection strategies, and evaluation designs and analytic techniques. Other vehicles for providing technical assistance may be proposed. For example, QIC applicants may propose conducting a 1-day workshop open to all prospective grantees in the designated geographical region. The workshop should be designed to provide information and answer questions of attendees;

5. Technical assistance to local grantees awarded funding by the QIC. QICs will be required to not only monitor the operations of the local projects, but also provide on-going support, guidance, and technical assistance to grantee sites to assist them in project implementation, data collection and evaluation;
6. Administrative and management structure for ensuring that local projects are implemented within 90-days of the award of their funding by the QIC, monitoring local grants funded under this initiative, including appropriate plans for fiscal accountability from the local projects;
7. Mechanisms for forming and maintaining a consortium and information-sharing network consisting of partnerships with and among sites awarded grants sponsored by the QIC (The Children's Bureau anticipates that the members of the consortium will meet regularly to exchange information and engage in collaborative problem-solving efforts.);
8. Methodology for evaluating local research and demonstration projects, including ensuring that appropriate qualitative and quantitative process and outcome data are collected by local sites and participating agencies and organizations;

9. Strategy for information dissemination, including fostering and strengthening communication and coordination activities with National Resource Centers and clearinghouses including, but not limited to, the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect and the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information; and
10. Institutionalize linkages with appropriate agencies, organizations and resources on the local, State or Federal level that are addressing issues pertaining to the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect and the functions and operations of CPS.

Presentation. Ten months after the award of the cooperative agreement, grantees will be required to make an oral presentation to the Children's Bureau staff in Washington, D.C., to describe and defend their Phase II-Version A implementation plan.

Plan for Phase II Version B: Implementation

One month after the presentation, the QIC will be required to submit a revised implementation work plan (Plan for Phase II-Version B) incorporating the recommendations of the Children's Bureau staff. This plan will be subject to further review and approval by the Children's Bureau prior to continuation funding.

EVALUATION: The four criteria that follow will be used to review and evaluate each application under this priority area. Each criterion should be addressed in the project description section of the application. The point values indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process. (100 Points total.)

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

In Phase I, the grantee will develop a Quality Improvement Center (QIC) designed to increase the capabilities of a designated geographical region to improve the quality of frontline CPS practice. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the goals and objectives of the QIC initiative described in this program announcement and how their proposed project would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives. This criterion consists of three components that should be addressed in the application: (1) program goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature; and (3) significance to researchers, academics, practitioners, policymakers and others involved in the child abuse and neglect, child welfare, and CPS fields.

As part of the application process, applicants should identify potential members of the Regional Advisory Group and obtain letters of commitment from these candidates. These letters should be included at the end of the application. It is anticipated that the Regional Advisory Group will consist of five to eight members, including academics/researchers, State/local government representatives, and service providers from the proposed region. These candidates should have substantial expertise in the child abuse and neglect, CPS and child welfare areas, extensive experience in developing collaborative partnerships with a wide variety of groups, and have the management skills necessary to ensure the timely completion of QIC tasks.

Project Goals and Objectives (15 Points)

Applicants must describe the context and geographic location to be served by the proposed Quality Improvement Center. This description should present an overview of the strengths and weakness of frontline CPS practices in the region. It should also include key socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the children and families that come to the attention of CPS in the region. This section should also discuss the processing and disposition of these cases. Administrative, legal, cultural, financial, managerial and other types of barriers to the effective delivery of child protective services in the region should also be addressed. Additional supporting documentation may be provided at the discretion of the applicant, but will count toward the total allowable page limit.

Applicants should present a vision of the goals, objectives, functions and operations of the QIC they anticipate developing. This narrative should also describe how the proposed QIC will promote evidence-based practices to improve frontline CPS practices as described in the proposed region. Applicants should also discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the implementation of the project.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the applicant understands the goals and objectives of the QIC initiative and how the proposed project will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the challenges, in terms of both opportunities and barriers, to designing and implementing the QIC (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the service needs of the region selected by the applicant; the status of existing services; and the type and extent of barriers to effective delivery of frontline child protective services (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear and concise vision of the role of the QIC in addressing the service needs of the region and localities (3 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the proposed QIC, if successfully implemented, will build local and regional capacity to improve the provision of frontline child protective services (3 Points).

Review of the Literature (5 Points)

Applicants are required to present a concise summary of the literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices and promising approaches nationally and regionally in the child maltreatment and child welfare fields pertaining to child protective service systems. The literature review should include a description of the cultural, financial, legal, bureaucratic and other types of barriers to the efficient and effective delivery of frontline child protective services.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise, preliminary review of the relevant and current literature, including best practices and promising approaches pertaining to the fields of the provision of frontline child protective services, child abuse and neglect, and child welfare fields (5 Points).

Significance (5 Points)

Applicants should explain how the proposed QIC will promote research and innovative demonstration projects on the regional and local level that will contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field. This section should include an overview of: (1) how the proposed project will produce results that will be useful to agencies within the region addressing the same or similar issues; and (2) a method of documentation of the QIC components and strategies such that the successful elements of the approach may be replicated in other geographic areas and settings. Detailed information should be provided in the Approach section.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed QIC will build an infrastructure of collaborative partnerships and information networks that will promote research and innovative demonstration projects that will contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed QIC, if successfully implemented, is likely to yield findings or results that may be used by other agencies and organizations in the fields of child abuse and neglect, child welfare, and CPS to improve the quality of frontline CPS practice (1 Point);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed QIC, if successfully implemented, is likely to develop strategies and sponsor research and demonstration projects that can be replicated by other regions and/or agencies addressing the same or similar problems and, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings (1 Point); and
- (4) Extent to which the findings, results, and products (such as information, materials, processes, and techniques) of the proposed QIC and QIC-sponsored research and demonstration projects will be disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information or strategies (1 Point).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (40 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a Phase I plan that addresses the components described in the Background section of this announcement and includes, but is not limited to: (1) an analysis of the characteristics of the children and families brought to the attention of the CPS in the region, the disposition of these cases (e.g., investigated, referred to social services, referred to court and the implications for improving frontline CPS practice; (2) the composition, role and responsibilities of a Regional Advisory Group; (3) a feasible and appropriate method for conducting a comprehensive needs assessment of the region; (4) a systematic approach for

identifying a topic focus; (5) a strategy for developing a comprehensive review of the literature and best practices; (6) an approach and method for the timely development of the Phase II implementation plan; and (7) a preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan that presents a clear and comprehensive vision of how the proposed QIC would operate.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the overall design and strategies to be used by the proposed QIC demonstrate an understanding of issues in the frontline CPS practice nationally, and the characteristics, needs and services currently available to children and families brought to the attention of CPS in the proposed region (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the composition of the Regional Advisory Group: (a) represents the key governmental and public and private agencies and organizations that are most active locally and in the proposed region; (b) reflects the diversity of the proposed region; and (c) includes members who have the expertise and managerial skills appropriate to Regional Advisory Group membership (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the roles and responsibilities of the Regional Advisory Group are appropriate and clearly described (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the principles and procedures used to govern the activities of the Regional Advisory Group are appropriate and clearly explained (1 Point);
- (5) Extent to which the plan for conducting the regional needs assessment is: (a) appropriate and feasible; (b) likely to result in the development of a comprehensive description and evaluation of the effectiveness of the current service delivery system; and (c) likely to identify service gaps and other barriers to the effective delivery of frontline child protective services (3 Points);
- (6) Extent to which the strategy for identifying a single topic focus for the QIC involves input from a wide range of stakeholders, including key regional, State, and local agencies and organizations (2 Points);
- (7) Extent to which the Phase I plan presents a feasible and appropriate method for conducting a comprehensive review of the literature on the topic selected that includes the identification of best practices and promising approaches in the fields of child abuse and neglect, child protective services and child welfare regionally and nationally (2 Points);
- (8) Extent to which the approach to be used in developing the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan is likely to result in the timely production of a plan that is feasible and appropriate, and includes input from a wide range of relevant sources (2 Points);
- (9) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents a viable conceptual framework or logic model describing the linkages between and among the (a) attributes of the populations, problems, conditions, and systems that are the

target of the interventions; (b) resources; (c) traditional and innovative services to be provided; and (d) short- and long-term outcomes (4 Points);

- (10) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents an appropriate and feasible approach for creating an administrative structure for announcing the availability of funding, and reviewing and awarding local grants, including program description, agency eligibility, funding levels, application evaluation criteria, and selection process (3 Points);
- (11) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents an appropriate and feasible plan for providing technical assistance to prospective local grantees to assist them in designing initiatives that meet the standards for research and demonstration projects funded under this initiative (1 Point);
- (12) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents an appropriate and feasible plan for providing support, guidance and technical assistance to local grantees to assist them in project implementation, data collection and evaluation (1 Point);
- (13) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents an appropriate and feasible plan constructing an administrative and management structure for ensuring that local projects are implemented within 90-days of the award of their funding by the QIC, monitoring and managing local grants funded under this initiative, including appropriate plans for fiscal accountability from the local projects (1 Point);
- (14) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents a feasible and appropriate approach to the formation of a consortium and information-sharing network consisting of partnerships with and among sites awarded grants sponsored by the QIC (3 Points);
- (15) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents a feasible and appropriate methodology for evaluating local research and demonstration projects, including ensuring that appropriate qualitative and quantitative process and outcome data are collected by local sites and participating agencies and organizations (2 Points);
- (16) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents feasible and appropriate strategies for information dissemination, including fostering and strengthening communication and coordination activities with National Resource Centers and clearinghouses including the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect and the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information (1 Point);
- (17) Extent to which the preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan identifies and addresses the conceptual, management and logistical issues involved in developing and implementing the QIC-sponsored research and demonstration projects (2 Points); and

- (18) Extent to which the overall preliminary design for the Phase II-Version A implementation plan presents a clear and comprehensive vision of how the proposed QIC would operate once grants are awarded (2 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (25 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed QIC. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience in the fields of child abuse and neglect, CPS and child welfare; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining work among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any proposed consultants and subcontractors; and (6) reasonableness of the organizational structure, including its management information system, to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a management plan describing a sound and feasible plan of action for implementing the Quality Improvement Center. This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. If appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors and consultants.

Applicants are required to provide a plan that describes the role, responsibilities and time commitments of each proposed staff position, including consultants, subcontractors and/or partners. Include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their contribution or effort.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates, accomplishments and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes, and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties.

Applicants should also describe their methods for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, and obtaining informed consent from participants.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to accomplishing the Phase I tasks on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (5 Points);

- (2) Extent to which the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined, and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed QIC (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the application discusses factors that may affect the development and implementation of the QIC and presents realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties (2 Points); and
- (4) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, and obtaining consent from participants (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications (8 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff, including consultants, have the requisite training, experience, expertise and commitment of sufficient time to conduct all of the QIC planning activities on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. Include information on staff experience working with child welfare populations and, as appropriate, describe the management, research, demonstration, or evaluation background and experience of the staff.

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included in the project narrative. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which individuals proposed for key positions have the necessary technical skill and experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities, including knowledge of child abuse and neglect, CPS and child welfare issues, collaborative partnerships, consortium management, design and implementation of research and/or demonstration projects, technical assistance in the child welfare area, and research and evaluation methodology (5 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (3 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (7 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully design and implement the proposed QIC on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant has experience in designing, implementing and/or evaluating research and/or demonstration projects on a local, regional or national level (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has experience in developing collaborative partnerships and/or consortia designed on a local, regional, or national level to promote collaborative problem solving and information sharing (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

The award for the 12-month planning phase will not exceed \$175,000 per QIC. The funding levels for years 2 through 5 will be \$500,000 per year per QIC. Applicants are advised that for the 48-month implementation phase, the proposed budget allocated by the QIC for administrative, management, and evaluation purposes may not exceed \$125,000 of the annual Federal funding for the implementation phase. The remaining \$375,000 is to be allocated to local grantee sites.

Approximately 12 weeks after the award of the 12-month planning phase of the cooperative agreement, the project director of each QIC will be required to attend a 2-day conference in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Children's Bureau for QIC awardees funded under this priority area.

Additionally, 10 months after the award of the 12-month planning cooperative agreements, QIC awardees will be required to make an oral presentation to the Children's Bureau staff in Washington, D.C., to describe and defend their plan for the Phase II-Version A implementation. Applicants are advised to propose sending three project staff to make the presentation—the project director, a member of the Regional Advisory Group, and one other representative (consultant, community representative, or potential consortium member). The budget for the 12-month planning grant should include funding for these three meetings in Washington D.C: the project director's meeting at approximately week 12, the three-person presentation meeting at month 10, and two key staff persons to attend the Children's Bureau annual grantees meeting, usually held in the spring.

In each of the four implementation years, QIC awardees will be expected to send only the project director and the evaluator to the annual grantee meeting.

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs appropriately allocated across component areas and sufficient to accomplish the objectives. They should demonstrate that costs for the proposed project are reasonable and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and the anticipated benefits and results. Applicants should refer to budget information submitted in Standard Forms 424 and 424A and the budget justification.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results and benefits (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The cooperative agreements will be awarded for a period of 60 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$175,000 per QIC for the first 12 months. Years 2 through 5 will be funded at a level of \$500,000 per budget period per QIC. The proposed budget allocated by the QIC for administrative, management, and evaluation purposes in years 2 through 5 may not exceed \$125,000 per year.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: The grantee must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved administrative cost of the project. The total approved administrative cost is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. Therefore, a project requesting \$175,000 for the 12-month planning phase must include a match of at least \$19,444. In years 2 through 5, awardees will be required to provide a 10 percent match on the total cost allocated by the QIC for administration, management, and evaluation. A project requesting an annual total of \$125,000 for these purposes will be required to provide a match of at least \$13,889 per year. QIC awardees are not required to provide a 10 percent match on the approximately \$350,000 that will be awarded to local sites.

The non-Federal share may be cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 100 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.670

2001B.5 Evaluations of Existing Child Abuse and Neglect Programs

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Public (State, Tribal, or local) or private nonprofit agencies, organizations, or institutions of higher learning are eligible to apply. Collaborative efforts and interdisciplinary applications are encouraged; however, a primary applicant must be identified.

PURPOSE: To support continuous innovation and improvement in the quality of child abuse and neglect services by evaluating existing child maltreatment programs that incorporate features and components that hold promise for contributing to an expansion of knowledge about familial and systemic aspects of the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect and have never been evaluated.

As with other offerings, the Administration on Children, Youth and Families maintains its interest in evaluation that will be especially informative about over-represented populations and communities, and special populations (i.e., racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities or other special needs).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The findings from evaluation projects supported under this priority are expected to provide insights into more efficient and effective approaches to the delivery of services in the areas of child abuse and neglect and Child Protective Services (CPS). While applicants will be accorded considerable latitude in the selection of the program to be evaluated and the proposed focus of the evaluation, the Children's Bureau is interested in evaluation projects that are likely to address one or more of the following goals: expand the current knowledge base, build on prior research, contribute to practice enhancements, inform policy, improve science, and contribute to the continued expansion of knowledge about the familial and systemic aspects of child maltreatment.

The program or project to be evaluated and research focus of the evaluation must be of sufficient scope and magnitude to merit intensive investigation. The evaluation focus should have national scope, and the findings from the evaluation should have a high probability of significantly advancing theory, policy and evidence-based practice in the field. Therefore, the program or project to be evaluated must have a sufficient number of subjects (e.g., children, families, social service providers, caseworkers, and supervisors) to sustain a rigorous, methodologically sound research and evaluation plan.

Programs or projects that are the focus of the proposed evaluation must be described clearly and in detail in the application. This description should include an explanation of the linkages among the characteristics and service needs of the target population, program or project services provided, and expected outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to include a logic model in the form of a schematic diagram, chart or other visual design that displays these linkages. Additionally, the conceptual, research, evaluation and/or practice basis underpinning the structure, operations, components or strategies used by the program or project should be explained.

Community-based organizations and agencies that do not have the in-house capacity to conduct an objective, large-scale evaluation are advised to propose contracting with a third-party

evaluator specializing in social science research and evaluation, or a university or college to conduct the evaluation.

Overview of Minimum Requirements for the Evaluation Design: In the narrative section of the application, applicants are expected to describe the objectives, background, significance and methodology for the proposed evaluation research. Applicants are advised to review carefully the application evaluation criteria specified in this program announcement and to structure their responses accordingly.

Objectives. The applicant is advised to describe clearly and succinctly the focus of the evaluation, the specific objectives of the proposed evaluation, and the research questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested.

Background and Significance. The following topics pertaining to the background and significance of the proposed evaluation should be discussed in the project narrative:

- (a) Description of the significant features and components of the program to be evaluated, including its goals and objectives, history, characteristics of the client population, geographic location, context, and services provided;
- (b) Current state of knowledge related to the evaluation focus, including a review of the relevant, current literature and any pilot tests;
- (c) Need for the proposed evaluation as either a new study to fill a knowledge gap or a study of a program in a new site, replicating an existing program to test the program under new conditions and validate existing knowledge or beliefs about the program;
- (d) Conceptual framework or logic model that structures the proposed evaluation and explains the linkages among the target population, program or project services and expected outcomes and the research and evaluation questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested; and
- (e) How the findings from the proposed study will significantly inform policy, improve practice, and/or advance the science of child abuse and neglect and CPS research.

Applicants are expected to include all bibliographic references.

Methodology. The methodology section of the project narrative should include the following components, as appropriate:

- (a) Proposed evaluation design, including definitions of terms and variables;
- (b) Population and sampling plan, including the rationale, and strengths and potential limitations for interpretations of findings due to the gender and/or ethnic composition of the proposed sample;
- (c) Use of comparison or control groups and the rationale for selecting these groups,

- (d) Recruitment and retention procedures, including realistic estimates of attrition, and a discussion of appropriate procedures for handling attrition or interpreting the findings of the evaluation in light of attrition;
- (e) Types of qualitative and quantitative data to be collected;
- (f) Data collection procedures and instruments, including information on reliability and validity of the instruments with the population proposed;
- (g) Access to the data sources (e.g., project files, staff, project clients); and
- (h) Data analysis plan appropriate to the study.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

The grantee will design and implement an evaluation of an existing child maltreatment program addressing any topic that will expand the current knowledge base, build on prior research, contribute to practice enhancements, inform policy, improve science, and contribute to the continued expansion of knowledge about the familial and systemic aspects of the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

Applicants will need to understand the goals and objectives of the national program and the outcomes initiative described in this program announcement and show how their proposed research and project evaluation would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives

If appropriate, applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

- (1) project goals and objectives; (2) conceptual framework and review of the literature; and
- (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners and policymakers in the fields of child abuse and neglect, Child Protective Services and child welfare.

Project Goals and Objectives (8 Points)

Applicants must describe the significant features and components of the program or project that is the focus of the evaluation. This description should include the goals and objectives, history, characteristics of the client population, geographic location, context, and services provided.

Applicants are expected to clearly and succinctly describe the focus of the proposed evaluation, the specific objectives of the study, and the research questions or hypotheses to be tested in the

evaluation. They should also discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the conduct of the evaluation. Details should be provided in the Approach section.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the national program and the outcomes initiative and explains how the proposed project evaluation will contribute to achieving the legislative goals (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant provides a clear and succinct description of the significant features and components of the program or project that is the focus of the evaluation, including its goals and objectives, history, characteristics of the client population, geographic location, context, and services provided (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the objectives of the proposed evaluation are clearly described (2 Points); and
- (4) Extent to which the research and evaluation questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested are clear, concise, appropriate and well-formulated (2 Points).

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework (8 Points)

Applicants are required to: (1) present a review of the current or seminal literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices pertaining to the issue; and (2) provide a conceptual framework or logic model that structures the proposed evaluation and explains the linkages among the program or project services and outcomes and the research and evaluation questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a coherent and cohesive conceptual framework or logic model that structures the proposed evaluation and explains the linkages among the program or project services and outcomes and the research and evaluation questions to be addressed or hypotheses to be tested (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the literature pertaining to the focus of the research, including any pilot tests (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives and evaluation research in the field of child maltreatment and specifies how the proposed research would build on or differ from this work (2 Points).

Significance (9 Points)

Applicants are expected to describe the need for the proposed research and indicate how the findings from the evaluation will significantly inform policy, improve practice, and/or advance the science of child maltreatment research.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed evaluation is likely to contribute to advancement in the field of child maltreatment by validating existing knowledge or addressing a significant gap in current knowledge (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed evaluation is likely to yield findings or results that will expand the current knowledge base, build on prior research, contribute to practice enhancements, inform policy, improve science, or provide insights into familial and systemic aspects of the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect (3 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the findings from the proposed evaluation will contribute to and promote evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional research in the field (3 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (50 Points)

Applicants are expected to describe the program to be evaluated in sufficient detail, such that its purpose, operations and services are clear, including its goals and objectives, history, characteristics of the client population, geographic location, context, and services provided, and distinctive features or components. This description should include an explanation of the linkages among the characteristics and service needs of the target population, program or project services provided, and expected outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to include a logic model in the form of a schematic diagram, chart or other visual design that displays these linkages. Additionally, the conceptual, research, evaluation and/or practice basis underpinning the structure, operations, components or strategies used by the program or project should be explained.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the proposed evaluation and provide details on how the research design will be implemented. The application should also describe the relationship between this project and any other federally assisted work planned, anticipated, or underway, by the applicant. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies and organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Applicants are expected to present a clear, detailed, and methodologically sound evaluation design that includes procedures for documenting evaluation activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure and analytic framework. The design should include, as appropriate, definitions of terms and variables, a population and sampling plan, use of control or comparison groups and a rationale for selecting these groups, recruitment and retention procedures, data collection procedures and instruments, access to the data sources and data analysis plan.

Applicants are required to describe the products that will be developed during the evaluation. Products may include questionnaires, interview guides and other data collection instruments, software designed for the proposed project, Internet applications (i.e., web postings), technical reports, journal articles, and a final report describing the project evaluated, issues addressed,

project design, implementation, outcomes and the results of the evaluation. Applicants should discuss the intended audiences for these products (e.g., researchers, policymakers, and practitioners) and present a dissemination plan specifying the venues for conveying the information.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the program to be evaluated is described in sufficient detail, such that its purpose, services and operations are clear, including its goals and objectives, history, characteristics of the client population, geographic location, context, and services provided, distinctive features for components, and the linkages among the characteristics and service needs of the target population, program or project services provided, and expected outcomes (5 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the rationale for the overall design of the proposed evaluation is explained clearly and is appropriate to the program to be evaluated (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents a realistic assessment of the strengths and potential limitations for interpreting and generalizing from the findings (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the program merits evaluation (3 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the population and sampling plan and/or use of comparison or control groups is feasible, realistic and appropriate to the evaluation focus (3 Points);
- (6) Extent to which recruitment and retention procedures are explained clearly and are appropriate to proposed research (2 Points);
- (7) Extent to which the application presents realistic estimates of attrition and describes appropriate procedures for handling attrition or interpreting the findings of the study in light of attrition (2 Points);
- (8) Extent to which the research design incorporates multiple methods of evaluation and the types of qualitative and quantitative data to be collected are clearly described and are appropriate to the proposed evaluation (3 Points);
- (9) Extent to which data collection procedures and instruments are described clearly; issues pertaining to the reliability and validity of the instruments with the population are discussed; and the proposed procedures and instruments are appropriate to the intended evaluation (3 Points);
- (10) Extent to which the evaluation design presents a feasible, realistic and appropriate plan for obtaining access to the data sources (e.g., project files, staff, project clients) (5 Points);
- (11) Extent to which the data analysis plan is presented clearly, describes the rationale for use of various analytic techniques, and is appropriate to the proposed study (6 Points);

- (12) Extent to which the overall design of the evaluation is feasible, realistic, methodologically sound and appropriate to the topic to be addressed and the research focus (8 Points);
- (13) Extent to which the application includes procedures for documenting evaluation activities and results are explained adequately and are appropriate to the proposed project (3 Points); and
- (14) Extent to which the application describes the products to be developed during the evaluation; clearly defines the intended audiences and explains how the project's products will be useful to these audiences; and explains how these products or materials will be disseminated (3 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with project evaluation; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining work relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any proposed consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure, including the management information system, to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a sound and feasible management plan for implementing the proposed evaluation. This section should detail how the evaluation will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. The role and responsibilities of the lead agency should be clearly defined and, if appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors and consultants.

Applicants are required to describe the role, responsibilities and time commitments of each proposed project staff position, including consultants, subcontractors and/or partners. Include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the evaluation fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates and accomplishments. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Applicants are required to describe their methods for ensuring compliance with all ACYF regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data; and obtaining informed consent from participants.

All applicants are required to provide Certification of Protection of Human Subjects Assurance as part of the application. As part of the management plan, if applicable, applicants are required to describe procedures for soliciting approval from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) and describe a data management plan to safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of data.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed evaluation on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel (including consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data, obtaining informed consent from participants, and protection of human subjects (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff have the requisite training, experience, and expertise to carry out the proposed evaluation on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality. Include information on staff experience in the fields of child abuse and neglect, Child Protective Services and child welfare, and the research background and experience of the staff.

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director, principal investigator, key project staff, and consultants have the necessary technical skill, knowledge, and research and evaluation experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points).
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, data collection, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to fulfill their assigned roles and functions. Include a complete, but brief discussion of relevant program, evaluation, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant and partnering organizations collectively have experience in conducting research and/or evaluations in the fields of child abuse and neglect, Child Protective Services and child welfare (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, data collection, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs, appropriately allocated across component areas and sufficient to accomplish the objectives. They should demonstrate that costs for the proposed project are reasonable and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and the anticipated results and benefits. Applicants should refer to the budget information submitted in Standard Forms 424 and 424A and the budget justification.

Applicants are expected to allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for a key staff person from the project to attend a 3- to 5-day grantees meeting in Washington, D.C., hosted by the Children's Bureau. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 36 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of each grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

Projects involving secondary analysis of existing data may propose a shorter duration.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$100,000 per budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: There is no matching requirement.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that up to four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 75 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.652

2001C: Abandoned Infants

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Abandoned Infants Assistance program is to support demonstration service programs that prevent the abandonment of children and to identify and address the needs of infants and young children who may be at risk for abandonment, particularly those with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and drug and/or alcohol exposure.

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) proposes to award grants in Priority Areas 2001 C.1 and 2001 C.2 in varying amounts up to \$450,000 per budget period and to award three projects in both Priority Area 2001 C.3 and 2001 C.4 in varying amounts up to \$100,000. Funds available for Abandoned Infants Assistance Program priority areas for fiscal year (FY) 2001 competitive grants under section 101 of the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act are approximately \$5.9 million. Grants are made to public and nonprofit, private entities.

DEFINITIONS: The enabling legislation provides definitions for three terms: “abandoned infants and young children,” “dangerous drug” and “natural family.” The term “abandoned infants and young children” means infants and young children who are medically cleared for discharge from acute-care hospital settings, but who remain hospitalized because of a lack of appropriate out-of-hospital placement alternatives.

The term “dangerous drug” means a controlled substance as defined in section 102 of the Controlled Substances Act. Although the term “natural family” is used in the legislation, ACYF prefers the term biological family. Therefore, the terms biological parents, family, mother or father will be used for the remainder of this program announcement. The term “biological family” shall be broadly interpreted to include biological parents, grandparents, family members, guardians, children residing in the household and individuals residing in the household on a continuing basis who are in a caregiving situation with respect to infants and young children covered under this Act. (42 U.S.C. 670 note, title I, section 103).

The term “permanency planning” refers to the systematic process of carrying out (within a brief, time-limited period) a set of goal-directed activities designed to help children live in permanent families. This process has the goal of providing the child continuity of relationships with nurturing parents or caretakers and the opportunity to establish lifetime family relationships.

“Standby guardianship” refers to a parent identifying a standby guardian to become the legal guardian of the parent’s minor children in the event the parent becomes unable to care for the children. In general, the standby guardian becomes the active caretaker of the children after either: (a) the death of the parent; (b) the parent becomes mentally or physically incapacitated; or (c) upon the request of the parent (Pinott, 1994).

BACKGROUND:

Legislation

Public Law 100-505, the Abandoned Infants Assistance Act of 1988 as amended, established a program for demonstration projects that help prevent the abandonment of infants and young children, particularly those who have been perinatally exposed to a dangerous drug and those with HIV or who have been perinatally exposed to HIV. These programs should be designed to:

- (a) Identify and address the needs of those infants and children who are, or might be, abandoned, or who are at risk of abandonment because of parental substance abuse or HIV status;
- (b) Develop a program of comprehensive services for these children and members of the biological family for any condition that increases the probability of abandonment of an infant or young child, including, but not limited to, foster family care services, case management services, family support services, parenting skills, in-home support services, counseling services and group residential home services; and
- (c) Recruit and train health and social services personnel, foster care families, and residential care providers to meet the needs of abandoned children and children who are at risk of abandonment.

The legislation also allows for the provision of technical assistance training programs to support the planning, development and operation of the service demonstration projects. The reauthorized legislation (Section 101 (h) of P. L. 100-505, as amended) mandates that the Secretary shall give priority to applicants located in States that have developed and implemented procedures for expedited termination of parental rights and placement for adoption of infants determined to be abandoned under State law.

Infants at Risk of Abandonment Due to Substance Abuse and/or HIV/AIDS

Incidence

The number of boarder babies and abandoned infants has grown over the past several years. The 1998 study, *National Estimates of the Number of Boarder Babies and Abandoned Infants*, found an estimated 13,400 boarder babies and 17,400 abandoned infants nationwide. This represents a

38 percent increase in the number of boarder babies (from 9700 babies in 1991) and a 46 percent increase in the abandoned infants (from 11,900 infants in 1991).

Related Factors

The link between female intravenous drug users, HIV perinatal transmission and the subsequent development of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) in young children continues to present an enormous challenge to pediatric health care workers. According to the most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data (1999), there are 8,596 AIDS-infected children under 13 years of age. That is approximately 1300 more than in 1996. While the overall rate of HIV/AIDS infection has decreased in recent years, the problem of caring for infected parents and children is still expected to grow because the number of individuals infected is so large.

Women are one of the fastest growing segments of the AIDS population. From 1985–1997, the proportion of total new AIDS cases reported annually in women increased from 7 percent to 22 percent. AIDS is the fourth leading cause of death among women age 15–44 years and the leading cause of death among African-American women aged 25–44. New treatments have reduced the rate of perinatal transmission to 8 percent and improved the likelihood of children being born without the virus. However, an unfortunate consequence of this is that more children born to HIV/AIDS infected women will be orphaned. The potential increase of orphaned children will impact the child welfare system and children's developmental outcomes.

Substance abuse has been indicated as a significant factor in cases of infant abandonment. Approximately 80 percent of these babies are prenatally exposed to illicit drugs (Abedin et al., 1992; James Bell Associates, 1993; Marcenko et al., 1992), as compared with approximately 11 percent of all babies born in the United States (National Association for Perinatal Addiction Research and Education, 1989; Vega, et al., 1993). These mothers are also more likely than women of child-bearing age in the United States to be infected with HIV (Ramler, O'Brien, Barth, Meyers, 1994). Thus, HIV/AIDS exposure is also relatively prevalent in abandoned infants. As many as 8 percent of infants abandoned in hospitals are reported to be HIV infected (Abedin et al., 1992; James Bell Associates, 1993) as compared with approximately 0.04 percent of all infants in the United States who are HIV infected each year (National Center for Health Statistics, 1994; National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, 1994). Due to inconsistent testing and confidentiality laws, however, this number may underestimate the magnitude of the problem.

HIV/AIDS exposure is closely connected with substance abuse during gestation and breastfeeding. Fetal exposure to HIV/AIDS is linked to maternal drug use. Mothers are most commonly infected with HIV through their own drug use or sexual relations with an IV drug user. Among the total number of pediatric AIDS cases in the U.S., 54 percent are related to either maternal injection drug use or maternal sex with an injecting drug user.

Challenges

Substance-abusing parents often have chaotic lifestyles characterized by poverty, poor social supports, significant psychological challenges, violence and poor education. For instance, an estimated 14 percent to 60 percent of substance abusers have mental health disorders.

Additionally, a disturbing number of people with alcohol and other drug problems come from backgrounds of family violence and abuse, and a recent study found that 80 percent of women entering treatment for addiction have a history of sexual abuse. Services developed to address the needs of this population also need to address these very difficult and complex issues.

Children who are HIV/AIDS infected are often ill and require intensive and specialized care. The delivery of services to these children is often complicated because the children and their families live in communities that lack the necessary resources or because caregivers have difficulty in accessing needed services. Further complicating the situation is the fact that all of these children have mothers who are HIV positive and many of the mothers are drug abusers who themselves need medical, social and other supportive services. Returning care of their children to the mothers may not be an option, because the mother may be too ill herself. Also, uninfected children living with a parent with HIV/AIDS require as complex a range of services as the infected individual. Due to the episodic nature of the disease, parents and primary caregivers may not be prepared to provide continuous care for their children. The children who will be or are orphaned by HIV/AIDS require social services, psychological and emotional support, and medical care specifically designed to address their needs. These children and adolescents need the stability of permanent home-caregivers.

Permanency Planning

A very relevant issue for children whose mothers are HIV/AIDS infected or drug abusers is permanency planning. Some States have taken steps to address this issue by enacting standby guardianship laws to allow parents to provide for the provisional care of their child and address the needs of both the child and the family. The laws are designed to be flexible in order to meet the parents' needs and may be implemented at any designated time including a period of illness, hospitalization or death.

If permanency is to be achieved early in the life of the developing child, intensive efforts must be made with the family to identify permanent caregivers and plan for the long-term care of children. Efforts must be made to deliver a comprehensive set of services to the biological and/or foster or adoptive family and the child. Special intervention and support services should be considered for children and adolescents who have lost a parent(s) to AIDS and who themselves may have HIV/AIDS.

Additional ways to provide needed services and to eliminate the barriers to permanency for children should be identified and implemented for (1) parents who are motivated to keep the child, but not to change their behaviors; and (2) parents who are motivated to change their behaviors, but are incapable of accessing the appropriate services on their own or of maintaining improved behaviors in their current environment.

Service and Prevention Programs

Early intervention can be effective in preventing various negative outcomes for children and families. Programs developed to prevent abandonment and provide appropriate intervention services to children who may be at risk for abandonment, particularly due to maternal HIV/AIDS infection and/or substance abuse, must address risk factors for abandonment and develop

appropriate intervention services, and be innovative enough to reach the target population, culturally appropriate to adequately address the needs, and based on a sound conceptual approach and effective practices.

Specific Data Collection Provisions

Applicants applying for funding under C.1 and C.2 (and C.3 or C.4, as appropriate) must comply with ACYF and the Children's Bureau in collecting information on the following program approaches that have been considered successful in working with the target population:

(a) Interagency Collaboration; (b) Intervention Teams; (c) Peer Services; (d) Home-Based Services; (e) Culturally Appropriate and Women-Focused Services; (f) Coordinated Medical and Social Services Case Management; and (g) Legal Policy and Program Development. Two additional suggested strategies that will establish permanency for the targeted population are Family Mediation and Relinquishment. (For additional information on the descriptions or definitions of these suggested program approaches, please visit the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center's web site <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~aiarc>.)

All applicants for funding under any of the four priority areas must collect data on individuals and families served; types of services provided; service utilization information; types and nature of needs identified and met and any other such information as may be required by ACYF. (For additional information on outcome measures, suggested data collection instrument and specific data characteristics, please visit the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center's web site: <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~aiarc>.)

Applicants must provide an assurance that they will submit descriptive data on the clients served and the services provided annually to the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center. Timeframes for the submission of data on outcome measures will be negotiated within six months after grant award.

Third-Party Evaluations

All applicants for funding under this priority area are required to contract for a third-party evaluation of the project. In order to evaluate the competence of the third-party evaluator and to assure that the evaluation methodology and design are appropriate, the third-party evaluator must write the evaluation section of the application. In selecting an evaluator, applicants are reminded that it is a regulatory requirement to encourage maximum free and open competition, using the applicant's own procurement policies and procedures. The application must indicate whether the third party evaluator was competitively selected, or whether the applicant is proposing a sole source contract for the evaluator. Sole source procurements must be fully justified in the application. For those applicants for funding under C.1, who plan to continue the services of their current third party evaluator, the application must include a sole source justification for review by the program office and the Office of Grants Management, ACYF.

2001C.1 Support for Previous Comprehensive Service Demonstration Projects

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Comprehensive service demonstration projects initially funded in FY 1997. Current grantees applying under this priority are advised that this is a competitive funding process and that applications approved for funding will be given a new grant number. Existing award activities cannot overlap with the new grant's project period, and funds from the currently existing grants cannot be expended for the new grant activities.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this priority area is to provide support for comprehensive service demonstration projects initially funded in FY 1997. Applicants must provide documentation and justification for the continuing need for the project. Applicants should propose ways of improving service provision to meet the needs of abandoned infants and young children or those who are at risk of abandonment and their families, and should propose methods to continue the program evaluation, including proposed outcome measures and summary evaluative data on the current program.

Projects supported under this solicitation are expected to serve as models for service providers to abandoned infants and/or infants who may be at risk for abandonment and their families. A model demonstration project must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or, replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- (b) Determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies using multiple measures of results; and
- (c) Produce detailed procedures and materials, based on the evaluation, that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices and programs that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings.

The demonstration project may also include but not be limited to one or more of the following or other related support services:

- (a) Counseling or support services for family members that address the special needs of women who are substance abusing and/or HIV positive or with an AIDS diagnosis, as well as the needs of the children of these women;
- (b) Case management;
- (c) On-going assessment of children;
- (d) Ongoing counseling for children and families, including bereavement counseling;
- (e) Support groups for families;
- (f) Legal and financial services;

- (g) Assistance with custodial issues;
- (h) Referral to public and private health care and social service resources, as well as assistance to families in navigating health care and social service systems; and/or,
- (i) Multidisciplinary collaboration.

NOTE: Short-term, transitional residential care services for small groups of infants or young children may be provided. For these services, however, it must be shown that the placements are necessary because the child is not yet well enough to return home and still needs medical care. Or, for example, a sufficient number of families cannot be recruited and trained to provide foster family care for abandoned infants and young children in the community or that such placements are in the best interests of the child. Applications including residential care services will be considered only if that component is part of and integral to a larger system of services directed toward achieving permanency for the children; and only if the residential services are designed to be transitional step (i.e., 3–6 months and no longer) to a permanent placement.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Abandoned Infants Assistance Program seeks to support demonstration service programs that prevent the abandonment of children and identify and address the needs of infants and young children who may be at risk for abandonment, particularly those with, or affected by, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), as well as drug and alcohol exposure. Grants are made to public and nonprofit, private entities for development, implementation and operation of projects to demonstrate how to achieve the following legislative purposes and program objectives:

- (a) Prevent the abandonment of infants and young children, including the provision of services to members of the biological family to address any condition that increases the probability of abandonment of an infant or young child, including drug abuse and/or HIV/AIDS;
- (b) Prevent the subsequent abandonment of infants and young children when they return to their homes from the hospital or foster care placement;
- (c) Identify and address the needs of abandoned infants, especially those with HIV/AIDS;
- (d) Assist abandoned infants and young children and/or HIV/AIDS infected children to reside with their biological families, relatives or foster and adoptive families, as appropriate, and to include the provision of respite care as needed;
- (e) Recruit, train and retain foster parents;
- (f) Carry out residential care programs for abandoned children and children with HIV/AIDS;
- (g) Establish programs of respite care of families and foster families;

- (h) Recruit and train health and social services personnel to work with families, foster families and residential care staff; and
- (i) Provide care for infants and young children through programs providing health, educational, and social services at an accessible site.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

The grantee will design and implement a demonstration project that involves an innovative approach to addressing the needs of, and providing services to, abandoned infants and young children, or those at risk of abandonment and their families, particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS. Applicants will need to understand the goals and objectives of the initiative described in this program announcement and how their proposed project would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives. Applicants must also show an understanding of the issues specific to abandoned infants and infants at risk for abandonment and their families, particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS that must be considered as part of the development and implementation of the demonstration project.

Applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

- (1) project goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature and conceptual framework; and
- (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners, and policymakers in the fields of child welfare including abandonment of infants and young children.

Program Goals and Objectives (7 Points)

Applicants must describe the context of the proposed demonstration project, including the geographic location, environment, magnitude and severity of the problem, and the needs to be addressed. The applicant should state the objectives for the program and indicate how these objectives relate to the community issues to be addressed and demonstrate that there is a need for the program, and the need is based on an assessment of community needs.

Applicants should also discuss relevant contextual factors that may facilitate or hinder the implementation of the project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the program (initiative) and legislative purposes and describes how the proposed project will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the characteristics and needs of the target population including relevant key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, service needs, and status of existing services for women and their families who are affected by substance abuse and HIV/AIDS (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes the benefits that clients will derive, the anticipated number of clients to be served and the basis for these estimates (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed project will build local capacity to provide services to children at risk for abandonment and their families after Federal funding has ceased (1 Point); and
- (5) Extent to which the applicant presents a clear and concise vision of services for the target population that are logically linked to the stated goals and objectives (1 Point).

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework (10 Points)

Applicants are required to present a review of the literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices pertaining to the issues.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the relevant literature and best practices pertaining to services to abandoned infants and children, families of children at risk for abandonment, and/or families affected by HIV/AIDS (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in the field and how the approach proposed project will build on or provide alternatives to these initiatives (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant provides a cohesive conceptual framework or logic model that is evidenced based (supported by theory, research, evaluation data, or best practices), structures the proposed demonstration project activities, and explains the linkages between and among proposed demonstration activities and outcomes (5 Points).

Significance (8 Points)

Applicants should explain how the proposed demonstration project is innovative and will contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field. This section should include an overview of: (1) how the proposed project will produce results that will benefit clients and be useful to agencies addressing the same or similar problems; (2) a method of documentation of project components and strategies such that the successful elements of the approach may be replicated in other settings; and (3) project products and a plan for dissemination of products and findings.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project, if successfully implemented and evaluated, is likely to yield findings or results that will contribute to and promote evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional research in the field (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed project or strategies can be replicated by other agencies addressing the same or similar problems and, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in other settings (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the findings, results, and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) will be packaged and disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information and strategies to implement evidence based practice improvement (2 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (50 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a plan that: (1) reflects an understanding of the characteristics, needs and services currently available to the target population; (2) provides services that directly address the needs of the target population; (3) is grounded in theory and practice; (4) is appropriate and feasible; (5) can be reliably evaluated; and (6) if successfully implemented, can be sustained after Federal funding has ceased.

Applicants must also describe ways in which the existing consortium of community-based agencies providing service to this target population services can be expanded, if possible, or changed, if necessary and demonstrate how the consortium has improved communication and working relationships between and among community agencies in coordinating services for this target population.

The consortium may include public health, child welfare, substance abuse treatment and other relevant human service agencies. To the extent possible, applicants are encouraged to formalize working relationships with the courts; service providers related to mental health and developmental disabilities; Head Start and special education providers; and community-based maternal and child health programs, including in-home visiting, respite care and housing assistance in the community.

Plans for coordinating joint medical-social service case management, outstationing child welfare staff at hospitals where a large number of at-risk infants are being delivered, or other methods to be used to bring about comprehensive service delivery must be supported by documentation, as well as described in the application.

This criterion consists of four topics that should be addressed in the application: (1) program design; (2) project services; (3) evaluation; and (4) product development and dissemination.

Program Design (15 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to define goals and specific, measurable objectives for the project. Goals and objectives should not be confused. Goals are the end product of an effective project. Objectives are measurable steps for reaching goals.

Applicants must describe any revision or expansion of project goals and objectives based on a review of the development and implementation of the program. The review should include an assessment of the effectiveness of the approaches and intervention strategies initially proposed. If revised approaches were used, they should also be assessed for their effectiveness. This process should also include an assessment of problems in program implementation and a discussion of the proposed improved strategies to address those barriers.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the project and provide details on how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must discuss potential contextual factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies and organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Applicants must describe how and what data will be collected on individuals and families; types of services provided; service utilization information, and the types and nature of needs identified and met.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the approach builds upon or expands on approaches and intervention strategies initially utilized and incorporates improved strategies that address previous challenges and/or barriers (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the outcomes are clearly specified and measurable, linked to the goals and objectives, and based on an understanding of the characteristics of the clients and the context of the intervention (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the design of the proposed project is evidence-based and reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices (2 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the design is feasible and appropriate to address the needs of the target population (2 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the proposed design includes procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation (2 Points);
- (6) Extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance (2 Points);

- (7) Extent to which the proposed project will work with terminally ill parents to make stand-by guardianship arrangements for their children to ensure the smooth transition to another caregiver and prevent a possible out-of-home placement (1 Point); and
- (8) Extent to which the proposed program will establish and coordinate linkages or working relationships with other appropriate and relevant agencies and organizations on the local, State or Federal level providing services to the target populations (1 Point).

Project Services (20 Points)

Applicants are required to provide a detailed description of the services to be provided by the program and how these services will bridge gaps in the current service-delivery system and benefit the target population.

In developing a broad and comprehensive approach, the applicant must describe ways in which the project will provide the wide range of assistance needed by the target population that could include, but not be limited to, parenting skills; supportive, therapeutic services; housing and transportation; health care and drug and alcohol treatment; as well as, ways of addressing the specialized health care and therapeutic intervention for infants exposed to drugs and HIV/AIDS to assist them in their physical and cognitive development. Applicants should also address ways to prevent out-of-home placement or describe methods to maintain and strengthen family stability.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project services are evidence-based and will build on current theory, research, evaluation data and best practices to contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed project is innovative and involves the demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed services are accessible and comprehensive in scope and will provide a broad range of services to address the target population's needs. (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services (2 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate and beneficial to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services (3 Points);
- (6) Extent to which the project will provide a program of service delivery that provides health, education and social services at a single site (as required by Section 101(a)(8) of P.L. 100-505, as amended), or will provide an alternative method of service delivery that will be readily accessible to the client families (3 Points); and

- (7) Extent to which the proposed range of services is enhanced based on previous experience in conducting a service program (3 Points).

Evaluation (10 Points)

Applicants are required to describe how the proposed project will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives. State the methods and procedures to be used to determine the extent to which the program has achieved the stated objectives.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for assessing the effectiveness of project strategies and implementation (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcome of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of program progress and a basis for program adjustments (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive and appropriate to the goals, objectives and context of the proposed project (1 Point);
- (5) Extent to which the evaluation plan is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies, and contribute to and promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings (1 Point); and
- (6) Extent to which the results and findings from the prior process and outcome evaluations are described clearly and used to structure the application (1 Point).

Materials Development and Dissemination Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are required to describe the products that will be developed during the implementation of the proposed project. Products may include questionnaires, interview guides and other data collection instruments, software designed for the proposed project, Internet applications (i.e., web postings), technical reports, journal articles, and a final report describing the target population, issues addressed, project design, implementation, outcomes and the results of the evaluation, or presentations at national or State conferences.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the products to be developed during the project are described clearly and will address the goal of dissemination of information to support evaluation research and evidence-based improvements of practices in the field (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the application clearly defines the intended audiences and explains how the project's products will be useful to these audiences (2 Points); and

- (3) Extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for developing these products, and provides a dissemination plan that is appropriate to each of these audiences (1 Point).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining working relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any consultants and subcontractors; and (6) reasonableness of the organizational structure, including its management information system, to carry out the project.

Applicants are also required to submit descriptive data on the clients served and the services provided annually to the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center. Timeframes for the submission of data on outcome measures will be negotiated with the National Abandoned Infants Resource Center. This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (4 Points)

This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled.

If appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants. Include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also required to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable and realistic schedule of activities, target dates, accomplishments, and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, completion dates, grant management reports, and a final report. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff, as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project task (2 Points); and

- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel (including consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points).

Staff Qualifications (6 Points)

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which proposed project director, key project staff, consultants, and partnership agencies have the necessary knowledge, experience and technical skill to successfully carry out their responsibilities (4 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is clearly outlined and adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Applicants should also describe their history and relationship with the targeted community. Include a complete discussion of relevant program, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant and partnering organizations collectively have experience in developing and implementing innovative programs or service-delivery systems in the field of infant abandonment, and serving children and families affected by HIV/AIDS (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs, appropriately allocated across component areas, and sufficient to accomplish the objectives. They should demonstrate

that costs for the proposed project are reasonable and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and the anticipated results and benefits. Applicants should refer to the budget information submitted in Standard Forms 424 and 424A and the budget justification.

Applicants are expected to allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for a key staff person from the project and the evaluator to attend an annual 3-day grantees' meeting in Washington, D.C. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

The application may **not** include the costs of construction or other major structural changes for facilities. Minor structural changes may be considered and approved by the Project Officer and Grants Management Office.

The dollar amount requested must be fully justified and documented in relation to the targeted population and community. The justification can include various community-specific factors related to substance abuse and perinatal exposure to drugs or HIV. For example, the applicant might include information on the rate of illegal drug use by women of child-bearing age; the rate of HIV positive women giving birth; the number of known drug users, the rate or number of infants who have a positive toxicology screen.

The size of a prior grant award is not, in and of itself, adequate justification to request the same amount under this announcement.

Applicants under this priority area must commit no less than 10 percent of the total approved project cost for the evaluation component. For example, a \$450,000 grant award with a \$50,000 match should commit no less than \$50,000 annually to the evaluation effort or a total of no less than \$200,000 during the entire project period.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted, anticipated results and benefits, and the needs of the target population/community (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 48 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: Grant amounts will vary and range up to \$450,000 per budget period per grantee for each of the 4 years.

MATCHING REQUIREMENT: The grantees must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF share and the non-Federal share. The non-Federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. Therefore, a project requesting a total of \$450,000 in Federal funds for the first budget period must include a match of at least \$50,000 (10 percent of total approved project costs). If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 85 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over that number will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.551

2001C.2 Support for New Comprehensive Service Demonstration Projects

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Any State, local public or nonprofit agency or organization including accredited colleges and universities. Applicants who can apply under this priority area include: (1) applicants in jurisdictions in which there currently does not exist a program funded under the Abandoned Infants Assistance Program (check the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center's web site <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~aiarc> for a list of current programs); (2) applicants who have previously received funding under the Abandoned Infants Assistance Program but are not currently grantees; and (3) applicants that are currently funded by the Abandoned Infants Assistance Program but are establishing a program in a separate locality serving a different target population, e.g., an agency establishing a program in a different city or establishing a second program in a city with a population over 1,000,000.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this priority area is to establish comprehensive service demonstration programs in jurisdictions/localities not already served by the Abandoned Infants Assistance Program to meet the needs of abandoned infants and young children, or those at risk of abandonment and their families; and to conduct a formative evaluation for years 1 and 2; and to collect information on client outcomes in years 3 and 4.

Projects supported under this solicitation are expected to serve as models for service providers to abandoned infants and/or infants who may be at risk for abandonment and their families. A model demonstration project must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based model with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or, replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;

- (b) Determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies using multiple measures of results; and
- (c) Produce detailed procedures and materials, based on the evaluation, that will contribute to and promote evidence-based strategies, practices and programs that may be used to enable others to replicate the model.

The demonstration project may also include but not limited to one or more of the following or other relevant support service:

- (a) Ongoing assessments of family systems, family member and child health, and family coping abilities;
- (b) Counseling or support programs for family members that address the special needs of women who are substance abusing and/or HIV positive or with an AIDS diagnosis, as well as the needs of the children of these women;
- (c) Case management;
- (d) Ongoing counseling for children and families, including bereavement counseling;
- (e) Support groups for families;
- (f) Legal and financial services;
- (g) Assistance with custodial issues;
- (h) Identification of public and private health care and social service resources, as well as assistance to families in navigating health care and social service systems; and/or
- (i) Multidisciplinary collaboration.

NOTE: Applications including residential care services will be considered only if that component is part of, and integral to, a larger system of services directed toward achieving permanency for the children; and only if the residential services are designed to be transitional (i.e., 3 to 6 months and no longer) to a permanent placement.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Abandoned Infants Assistance Program seeks to support demonstration service programs that prevent the abandonment of children and identify and address the needs of infants and young children who may be at risk for abandonment, particularly those with, or affected by, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and drug and alcohol exposure. Grants are made to public and nonprofit, private entities for development, implementation and operation of projects to demonstrate how to achieve the following legislative purposes and program objectives:

- (a) Prevent the abandonment of infants and young children by providing support services to the family, including drug treatment, HIV/AIDS prevention, and abuse prevention;

- (b) Identify and address the needs of abandoned infants, especially those with HIV/AIDS;
- (c) Assist HIV/AIDS infected children to reside with their natural families if possible, or in foster care;
- (d) Recruit, train and retain foster parents;
- (e) Carry out residential care programs for abandoned children and children with HIV/AIDS;
- (f) Establish programs of respite care of families and foster families;
- (g) Recruit and train health and social services personnel to work with families, foster families and residential care staff; and
- (h) Provide care for infants and young children through programs providing health, educational, and social services at an accessible site.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

The grantee will design and implement a demonstration project that involves an innovative approach to addressing the needs of, and providing services to, abandoned infants and young children, or those at risk of abandonment and their families, particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS. Applicants will need to understand the goals and objectives of the initiative described in this program announcement and how their proposed project would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives. Applicants must also show an understanding of the issues specific to abandoned infants and infants at risk for abandonment and their families, particularly those affected by HIV/AIDS that must be considered as part of the development and implementation of the demonstration project.

Applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

- (1) project goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature and conceptual framework; and
- (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners, and policymakers in the fields of child welfare including abandonment of infants and young children.

Program Goals and Objectives (7 Points)

Applicants must describe the context of the proposed demonstration project, including the geographic location, environment, magnitude and severity of the problem, and the needs to be addressed. The applicant should state the objectives for the program and indicate how these objectives relate to the community issues to be addressed and demonstrate that there is a need for the program, and the need is based on an assessment of community needs.

Applicants should also discuss relevant contextual factors that may facilitate or hinder the implementation of the project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the program (initiative) and legislative purposes and describes how the proposed project will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the characteristics and needs of the target population including relevant key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, service needs, and status of existing services for women and their families who are affected by substance abuse and HIV/AIDS (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes the benefits that clients will derive, the anticipated number of clients to be served and the basis for these estimates (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed project will build local capacity to provide services to children at risk for abandonment and their families after Federal funding has ceased (1 Point); and
- (5) Extent to which the applicant presents a clear and concise vision of services for the target population that are logically linked to the stated goals and objectives (1 Point).

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework (10 Points)

Applicants are required to present a review of the literature that reflects an understanding of the research and best practices pertaining to the issues.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the relevant literature and best practices pertaining to services to abandoned infants and children, families of children at risk for abandonment, and/or families affected by HIV/AIDS (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in the field and how the approach proposed project will build on or provide alternatives to these initiatives (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant provides a cohesive conceptual framework or logic model that is evidenced based (supported by theory, research, evaluation data, or best practices) to

structure the proposed demonstration project activities, and explains the linkages between and among proposed demonstration activities and outcomes (5 Points).

Significance (8 Points)

Applicants should explain how the proposed demonstration project is innovative and will contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field. This section should include an overview of: (1) how the proposed project will produce results that will benefit clients and be useful to agencies addressing the same or similar problems; (2) a method of documentation of project components and strategies such that the successful elements of the approach may be replicated in other settings; and (3) project products and a plan for dissemination of products and findings.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project, if successfully implemented and evaluated, is likely to yield findings or results that will contribute to and promote evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional research in the field (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed project or strategies can be replicated by other agencies addressing the same or similar problems and, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in other settings (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the findings, results, and products (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) will be packaged and disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information and strategies to implement evidence-based practice improvement (2 Point).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (50 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a plan that: (1) reflects an understanding of the characteristics, needs and services currently available to the target population; (2) provides services that directly address the needs of the target population; (3) is grounded in theory and practice; (4) is appropriate and feasible; (5) can be reliably evaluated; and (6) if successfully implemented, can be sustained after Federal funding has ceased.

The consortium may include public health, child welfare, substance abuse treatment and other relevant human service agencies. To the extent possible, applicants are encouraged to formalize working relationships with the courts; service providers related to mental health and developmental disabilities; Head Start and special education providers; and community-based maternal and child health programs, including in-home visiting, respite care and housing assistance in the community.

Plans for coordinating joint medical-social service case management, outstationing child welfare staff at hospitals where a large number of at-risk infants are being delivered, or other methods to be used to bring about comprehensive service delivery must be supported by documentation, as well as described in the application.

This criterion consists of four topics that should be addressed in the application: (1) program design; (2) project services; (3) evaluation; and (4) product development and dissemination.

Program Design (15 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to define goals and specific, measurable objectives for the project. Goals and objectives should not be confused. Goals are the end product of an effective project. Objectives are measurable steps for reaching goals.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the project and provide details on how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must discuss potential contextual factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies or organizations, the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Applicants must describe how and what data will be collected on individuals and families; types of services provided; service utilization information; and types and nature of needs identified and met.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the outcomes are clearly specified and measurable, linked to the goals and objectives, and based on an understanding of the characteristics of the clients and the context of the intervention (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the design of the proposed project is evidence-based and reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the design is feasible and appropriate to address the needs of the target population (2 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed design includes procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation (2 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of federal financial assistance (2 Points);
- (6) Extent to which data collection for process and outcome data are clearly described and include both qualitative and quantitative assessment methods (2 Points); and
- (7) Extent to which the proposed project will work with terminally ill parents to make stand-by guardianship arrangements for their children to ensure the smooth transition to another caregiver and prevent a possible out-of-home placement (1 Point); and
- (8) Extent to which the proposed program will establish and coordinate linkages or working relationships with other appropriate and relevant agencies and organizations on the local, State or Federal level providing services to the target populations (1 Point).

Project Services (20 Points)

Applicants are required to provide a detailed description of the services to be provided by the program and how these services will bridge gaps in the current service-delivery system and benefit the target population.

In developing a broad and comprehensive approach, the applicant must describe ways in which the project will provide the wide range of assistance needed by the target population that could include parenting skills; supportive, therapeutic services; housing and transportation; health care and drug and alcohol treatment; as well as, ways of addressing the specialized health care and therapeutic intervention for infants exposed to drugs and HIV/AIDS to assist them in their physical and cognitive development. If an applicant has previously had an Abandoned Infants grant, then the proposed range of services should include a discussion of any enhanced services based on prior years' experience in conducting a service program.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project services are evidence-based and will build on current theory, research, evaluation data and best practices to contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (5 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed project is innovative and involves the demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed services are accessible and comprehensive in scope and will provide a broad range of services to address the target population's needs (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services, including the formation of a consortium, coordinating group or community board (2 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate and beneficial to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services (3 Points); and
- (6) Extent to which the project will provide a program of service delivery that provides health, education and social services at a single site (as required by Section 101(a)(8) of P.L. 100-505, as amended) or will provide an alternative method of service delivery that will be readily accessible to the client families (3 Points).

Evaluation (10 Points)

Applicants are required to describe how the proposed project will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives. State the methods and procedures to be used to determine the extent to which the program has achieved the stated objectives.

Applicants must describe ways to collect process and outcome measures data for the project. For examples, applicants should consider a tiered evaluation plan (1) to collect formative evaluation data; and (2) to collect data on outcome measures as the information becomes available. The evaluation plan should address both aspects even though process data may be the only reportable data available for years 1 and 2. The evaluation component of the application should include methods of collecting descriptive data on the characteristics of the clients served and the services provided. This evaluation should be designed to collect systematic data to answer questions such as the following:

- (a) What are the characteristics of families who abandon children?
- (b) What are the services needs of children, mothers, fathers, and families of drug exposed infants? Of HIV-positive infants?
- (c) What are the barriers to comprehensive case management and to the coordination of service delivery?
- (d) What changes have been most helpful in improving the delivery of services? What changes/improvements have there been in the child's well being and the child's development?
- (e) What changes have there been in the family's stability and ability to function?
- (f) What are the permanency outcomes for children?

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for assessing the effectiveness of project strategies and implementation (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcome of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of program progress and a basis for program adjustments (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the methods of evaluation are feasible, comprehensive and appropriate to the goals, objectives and context of the proposed project (1 Point);
- (5) Extent to which the evaluation plan is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies, and contribute to and promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings (2 Points); and
- (6) Extent to which the evaluation plan will provide information regarding the characteristics of the target population, services needed, barriers and challenges, and positive improvements (1 Point).

Materials Development and Dissemination Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are required to describe the products that will be developed during the implementation of the proposed project. Materials may include questionnaires, interview guides and other data collection instruments, software designed for the proposed project, Internet applications (i.e., web postings), technical reports, journal articles, and a final report describing the target population, issues addressed, project design, implementation, outcomes and the results of the evaluation.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the materials to be developed during the project are described clearly and will address the goal of dissemination of information to support evaluation research and evidence-based improvements of practices in the field (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the application clearly defines the intended audiences and explains how the project's materials will be useful to these audiences (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for developing these materials, and provides a dissemination plan that is appropriate to each of these audiences (1 Point).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining working relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any consultants and subcontractors; and (6) reasonableness of the organizational structure, including its management information system, to carry out the project.

Applicants are required to contract a third-party evaluation of the project. In order to evaluate the competence of the third-party evaluator and to assure that the evaluation methodology and design are appropriate, the third party evaluator must write the evaluation section of the application. In selecting an evaluator, applicants are reminded that it is a regulatory requirement to encourage maximum free and open competition, using the applicant's own procurement policies and procedures. The application must indicate whether the third-party evaluator was competitively selected, or whether the applicant is proposing a sole source contract for the evaluator. Sole source procurements must be fully justified in the application.

Applicants are also required to submit descriptive data on the clients served and the services provided annually to the National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center. Timeframes for the submission of data on outcome measures will be negotiated with the grantee by the Resource Center within 6 months after grant award.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (4 Points)

This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled.

If appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants. Include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also required to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable and realistic schedule of activities, target dates, accomplishments, and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, completion dates, grant management reports, and a final report. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff, as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project task (2 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel (including consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points).

Staff Qualifications (6 Points)

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which proposed project director, key project staff, consultants, and partnership agencies have the necessary knowledge, experience and technical skill to successfully carry out their responsibilities (4 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is clearly outlined and adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Applicants should also describe their history and relationship with the targeted community. Include a complete discussion of relevant program, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant and partnering organizations collectively have experience in developing and implementing innovative programs or service-delivery systems in the field of infant abandonment, and serving children and families affected by HIV/AIDS (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs, appropriately allocated across component areas, and sufficient to accomplish the objectives. They should demonstrate that costs for the proposed project are reasonable and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and the anticipated results and benefits. Applicants should refer to the budget information submitted in Standard Forms 424 and 424A and the budget justification.

Applicants are expected to have sufficient funds in the budget for a key staff person from the project and the evaluator to attend an annual 3-day grantees' meeting in Washington, D.C. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

The application may not include the costs of construction or other major structural changes for facilities. Minor structural changes may be considered and approved by the Project Officer and Grants Management Office.

Applicants under this priority area must commit no less than 10 percent of the total approved project cost for the evaluation component. For example, a \$450,000 grant award with a \$50,000 match should commit no less than \$50,000 annually to the evaluation effort or a total of no less than \$200,000 during the entire project period.

Applicants should describe the fiscal control and accounting procedures that will be used to ensure prudent use, proper disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted, anticipated results and benefits, and the needs of the target population/community (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 48 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: Grant amounts will vary and range up to \$450,000 per budget period for each of the 4 years.

MATCHING REQUIREMENT: The grantees must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the ACF share and the non-Federal share. The non-Federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. Therefore, a project requesting a total of \$450,000 in Federal funds for the first budget period must include a match of at least \$50,000 (10 percent of total approved project costs). If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 85 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over that number will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.551

2001C.3 Family Support Services for Grandparents and Other Relatives Providing Care for Children of Women Who Are Substance Abusing and HIV Positive

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Public agencies and private, nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education are eligible to apply.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this priority area is to provide counseling and other support services to family caregivers for children of women who are drug exposed, HIV exposed, HIV positive,

or HIV/AIDS affected. Projects supported under this solicitation are expected to serve as models for service provision to caregivers of children affected by substance abuse or HIV/AIDS. A model demonstration project funded under this initiative must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based project with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data to establish or enhance a system of support services for family caregivers, which should include the following: counseling, legal and financial services, and assistance with custodial issues. Additional (optional) services or components of the model may include:
 - Educational programs for family members that address the special needs of women who are substance abusing and/or HIV positive or with an AIDS diagnosis, as well as the needs of the children of these women, in order to enhance their understanding of the issues involved;
 - Ongoing counseling for children and families, including bereavement counseling; and,
 - Referrals to public and private health care and social service resources, as well as assistance to families in navigating health care and social service systems, as needed.
- (b) Determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies; and,
- (c) Produce materials that would enable others to replicate the model.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: An increasing number of parents who are HIV positive and/or substance abusing become unable to provide adequate care for their infants and young children. Grandparents and other family members frequently assume the responsibility as the primary caregiver for the children. Social service agencies report that an increasing number of families include a grandparent raising a grandchild, a circumstance that is primarily due to parental drug addiction.

Many of the children born to women who are drug abusing, HIV positive, or AIDS infected suffer medical or behavioral problems as a result of their mother's addiction or health status. They may be hyperactive, have severe or chronic health problems, and exhibit/suffer developmental and neurological delays, or may be HIV positive themselves. These children may be more difficult to parent. Also, family members may not be adequately prepared for their caregiver role, particularly grandparents who are dealing with their own aging or health issues.

In addition to parenting issues, families must also deal with financial support and custody issues. Family member caregivers frequently operate outside the public child welfare system and receive little, if any, financial assistance. If assistance is available, it is generally at a rate lower than the foster care rates. Many caregivers receive no financial assistance at all. In addition, caregivers may need assistance in gaining access to support services for themselves to cope with the responsibilities of rearing children at an older age.

Familial caregivers may benefit from education in how best to care for children who have been exposed prenatally to a dangerous drug or who may be HIV positive or HIV/AIDS affected. The caregivers can benefit from training regarding appropriate expectations for these children; how to nurture and care for them; and how to access other supportive services for the children; as well as benefit from accessing respite care for themselves. Family caregivers may also need some education to deal with the addictive behaviors of the child's parent(s). In addition, if the parent is HIV positive, the caregivers will need support in dealing with the illness and eventual death of the child's parent and, perhaps, the eventual death of the child.

The purpose of this priority area is to provide funds to any group or organization that has experience in providing counseling and other support services to family caregivers for children of women who are drug exposed, HIV positive, or HIV/AIDS affected. The funds will be used to establish or enhance a system of support services that should include, but not be limited to, social services, counseling, legal and financial services, and assistance with custodial issues.

EVALUATION: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application under this priority area. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

The grantee will design and implement a demonstration project that involves an evidence-based approach to addressing the needs of family caregivers for children who are drug exposed, HIV exposed, HIV positive, or HIV/AIDS affected. Applicants will need to understand the goals and objectives of the national program described in this program announcement and how their proposed project would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives. Applicants must also show an understanding of the issues specific to grandparents and other relatives providing care for children of women who are substance abusing and/or HIV positive.

Applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memorandum of Understanding from organizations, agencies and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application: (1) program goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature and conceptual framework; and (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners and policy makers in the fields of HIV/AIDS, abandoned infants, foster care and child welfare.

Project Goals and Objectives (10 Points)

Applicants must describe the context of the proposed demonstration project, including the geographic location, magnitude and severity of the problem, and the needs to be addressed. The description should present the strengths and weaknesses of current social services and the gaps in service to be filled by the applicant. The applicant should state and demonstrate that there is a need for the program, that the need is based on an assessment of the community, and how the objectives for the program relate to the community needs.

Applicants should present a vision of the services system they anticipate developing or enhancing, beginning with a statement of the goals and objectives of the project. Applicants should also discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the implementation of the project. (Details should be provided in the Approach section.)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant understands the goals and objectives of the abandoned infants program service demonstration effort and how the proposed project will contribute to achieving those goals and objectives (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear and concise vision of services for family caregivers of children of women who are drug exposed, HIV exposed, HIV positive, or HIV/AIDS affected (1 Point);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the service needs of the target population and community in the designated area, as well as the status of existing services for children and their families/caregivers. Applicants should identify the population to be served by the project; describe the needs of the target population; provide an estimated number of caregivers and children the project will serve; identify the geographic location to be served by the project; describe the key socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the targeted community as it relates to the children of women of childbearing age and women and families who are affected by substance abuse and HIV/AIDS; describe the service needs of this population; describe the current availability of needed services that serve children of women who are substance abusing and/or AIDS/HIV infected and their families in the community; and describe the services the applicant will provide (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the applicant identifies the specific results or benefits that can be expected for the children of women who are substance abusing and/or women with HIV/AIDS and the grandparents or other relatives providing care, as well as the specific community-wide results expected, if any (1 Point);
- (5) Extent to which the applicant describes the methods/procedures used to determine whether the program has achieved the stated objectives (1 Point);
- (6) Extent to which the proposed project will build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population (1 Point); and
- (7) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the challenges, in terms of both opportunities and barriers, to designing and implementing the program (1 Point).

Review of the Literature and Conceptual Framework (8 Points)

Applicants are required to present a review of the literature that reflects an understanding of the current or seminal research and evidence-based practices pertaining to the issue.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of the relevant literature and evidence-based approaches regarding counseling and other support services to family caregivers for children of women who are drug exposed, HIV positive, or HIV/AIDS affected (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in the field and how the proposed project will build on or differ from this work (2 Points); and,
- (3) Extent to which the applicant provides a cohesive conceptual framework or logic model that is evidence-based (supported by research, theory, evaluation data or other service projects) to structure the proposed program, and explains the linkages between and among proposed demonstration activities and outcomes (4 Points).

Significance (7 Points)

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project is innovative and involves the demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies conducted by the applicant or by other agencies (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed project will build on current knowledge and evidence-based practices and contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings or results that may be used by other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice and identify issues for additional research in this field (2 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed project or strategies can be replicated by other agencies addressing the same or similar problems and, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings (1 Point); and,
- (5) Extent to which the finding, results, and products of the project (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) will be disseminated in ways that will contribute to evidence-based practice by enabling others to use the information or strategies (1 Point).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (50 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a plan that: (1) reflects an understanding of the characteristics, needs and services currently available to the target population; (2) provides services that directly address the needs of the target population; (3) is grounded in theory and practice; (4) is appropriate and feasible; (5) can be reliably evaluated; and (6) if successfully implemented, can be sustained after Federal funding has ceased.

This criterion consists of four topics that should be addressed in the application: (1) program design; (2) project services; (3) evaluation; and (4) product development and dissemination.

Program Design (15 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to define goals and specific, measurable objectives for the project. Goals and objectives should not be confused. Goals are the end product of an effective project. Objectives are measurable steps for reaching goals.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the project and provide details on how the proposed project will be accomplished. Applicants must describe how and what data will be collected data on individuals and families; types of services provided; service utilization information; and types and nature of needs identified and met. If the project involves partnerships with other agencies or organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which goals, objectives and outcomes to be achieved are clearly specified and measurable, as well as based on an understanding of the problems involved in caring for children of parents who are substance abusing and/or HIV positive, the special needs of children who may be HIV positive, and the program, service, and legal issues involved in serving families affected by substance abuse and HIV/AIDS (5 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the design reflects evidence of the applicant's commitment to and strategies for working with a social service agency, or a public health agency, or a mental health agency, and legal services in providing needed consultation, support services, and advice to family caregivers (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the design reflects a willingness and ability on the part of the applicant to work with families in establishing, to the extent possible, standby guardianship arrangements (or medical or educational authority to make decisions) for the child/children in the care of the family member (2 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed design describes procedures for documenting project activities and results, including a description of how and what data will be collected on individuals and families; types of services provided; service utilization information; and types and nature of needs identified and met (3 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance (2 Points); and
- (6) Extent to which the proposed project will establish and coordinate linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations on the local, State, or Federal level providing services to family caregivers for children of women who are drug exposed, HIV positive, or HIV/AIDS affected (1 Point).

Project Services (20 Points)

Applicants are required to provide a detailed description of the services to be provided by the program, explaining how these services will bridge gaps in the current service-delivery system and benefit the target population.

Specific Evaluation Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which services to be provided by the proposed project are innovative and reflect-up-to-date knowledge from research and/or effective practices (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the design is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the multiple needs of the relative caregivers, particularly the support services needed to address the unique needs of families dealing with intergenerational differences and issues, which may include maintaining relationships with siblings who reside elsewhere (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of family caregivers for children of women who are drug exposed, HIV positive, or HIV/AIDS affected (3 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services (3 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the services to be provided will be beneficial to family caregivers for children of women who are drug exposed, HIV positive, or HIV/AIDS affected (8 Points).

Evaluation (10 Points)

Applicants are required to describe how the proposed project will be evaluated to determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives. The evaluation design is expected to include process and outcome analyses with qualitative and quantitative components.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies (process evaluation) (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcome of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative outcome data to the extent possible (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of program progress and a basis for program adjustments toward achieving intended outcomes (1 Point);
- (4) Extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, outcomes and context of the proposed project (3 Points); and

- (5) Extent to which the evaluation plan is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies and contribute to promoting evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication or testing in other settings (2 Points).

Product Development and Dissemination Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are required to describe the materials that will be developed during the proposed project. Materials may include technical reports, questionnaires and other data collection instruments, journal articles, Internet applications (i.e., web postings), software, and a final report based on the evaluation (in addition to required grants management reporting).

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the materials to be developed during the project are described clearly and will address the goal of dissemination of information to support evaluation research and evidence-based improvements of practices in the field (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the application clearly defines the intended audiences and explains how the project's materials will be useful to these audiences (2 Points); and,
- (3) Extent to which the application presents a realistic schedule for developing these materials and provides a dissemination plan that is appropriate to each of these audiences (1 Point).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining work relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any proposed consultants and subcontractors; and, (6) reasonableness of the organizational structure, including its management information system, to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a sound and feasible management plan for implementing the proposed project. This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. The role and responsibilities of the lead agency should be clearly defined and, if appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners, subcontractors, and consultants.

Applicants should include a list of organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants also are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates, accomplishments and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, completion dates, grant management reports, and a final report. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff, as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel (including consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents an appropriate and adequate plan for ensuring compliance with all Departmental regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data; and obtaining informed consent from participants (1 Point).

Staff Qualifications and Commitment (5 Points)

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

If appropriate, the applicant should provide a description of plans for training project staff as well as staff of cooperating organizations and individuals.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director, key project staff, consultants and partnership agencies have the necessary knowledge, experience, and technical skills to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the staffing plan is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, evaluation, and reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to successfully carry out the project on time and to a high standard of quality, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Applicants should also describe their history and relationship with the targeted community. Include a complete but brief discussion of relevant program, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant organization and partnering agencies, as appropriate, have experience in providing services to caregivers of women who are substance abusing and who have HIV/AIDS and their infants and/or young children and in providing social support services to families faced with dealing with HIV/AIDS (2 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of family caregiver support and service needs, as well as demonstrates a history of involvement with grandparent groups or other family caregiver group that specifically address the needs of children of women who are drug exposed and/or HIV positive (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, evaluation, and reporting and dissemination of findings (1 Point).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants under this priority area are encouraged to commit a minimum of approximately five percent of the total approved project cost for an evaluation of the project. For example, a grant award of \$100,000 with a match of \$11,111 per budget period should commit approximately \$5,500 annually to the evaluation effort for each of 4 years.

Applicants are expected to allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for a key staff person from the project and the evaluator to attend an annual 2- to 3-day grantees' meeting in Washington, D.C. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results and benefits (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the dollar amount requested is fully justified and documented in terms of the targeted population and community. The justification can include various community-

specific factors related to substance abuse and perinatal exposure to drugs or HIV (for example, the applicant might include information on the rate of illegal drug use by women of child-bearing age, the rate of women who are HIV positive giving birth, and/or the rate or number of infants who have a positive toxicology screen) (4 Points); and

- (3) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (2 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 48 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: Grant amounts will not exceed \$100,000 per budget period for each of the 4 years. The dollar amount requested must be fully justified and documented.

MATCHING REQUIREMENT: Grantees must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. The non-Federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. Therefore, a project requesting \$100,000 in Federal funds per year must include a match of at least \$11,111 (10 percent of approved project costs per budget period). If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that up to three projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 75 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over that number will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.551

2001C.4 Recreational Services for Children Affected by HIV/AIDS

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Public agencies and private, nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education are eligible to apply.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this priority area is to fund programs that provide counseling, support services and/or respite care in a recreational or camp setting for children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Projects supported under this priority area are expected to

serve as models for service provision to children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. A model demonstration project funded under this initiative must:

- (a) Develop and implement an evidence-based project with specific components or strategies that are based on theory, research, or evaluation data; or, replicate or test the transferability of successfully evaluated program models;
- (b) Determine the effectiveness of the model and its components or strategies; and,
- (c) Produce materials that will enable others to replicate the model.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Between January and June 2000, 5,857 AIDS cases were reported to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for children between the ages of 5 and 19. Thousands more are infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Some of these children live in communities plagued by poverty or violence and/or with families burdened by substance abuse. These children must also deal with the loss or impending loss of their parent(s), as well as their own likely death if they are also infected with HIV/AIDS. Some of these children/adolescents may also have chronic health problems and developmental and neurological delays. Thus, children affected by HIV/AIDS deal with chronic stress such as medical illness, bereavement, low self-esteem, and, in many cases, stigma or embarrassment. These issues place children and adolescents at risk for a variety of psychological and/or emotional disturbances. Also, there may be various other negative outcomes associated with these factors, particularly for children and adolescents affected by HIV/AIDS, such as drug addiction, unsafe sex, teen pregnancy, and other self-destructive behaviors. Intervention and prevention programs and activities are particularly needed for this population. It is necessary for children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS to have experiences that develop their self-confidence and promote their overall social and emotional development. These children and adolescents need a supportive, caring environment in which to express their sense of loss, their anxieties, their fear of dying and their plans for the future.

Projects funded under this priority area will examine the impact that a supportive, recreational, or camping program may have on children/adolescents in coming to terms with the loss of a parent(s) and or in coming to terms with their own illness due to HIV/AIDS. This effort will test the feasibility that a supportive recreational or camping environment will have a positive impact on children/adolescents in which they will learn to reduce their own risk behavior; develop a peer network of support with others who have had a similar experience and find ways to deal with their fears and anxieties. ACYF will provide support for recreational or camping programs that can be one day, one week, or several weeks in duration or once a week over a period of several weeks. This proposed project could take place either in the summer months or during the school year.

EVALUATION: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (25 Points)

The grantee will design and implement recreational or camp activities with an innovative approach to counseling children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Applicants will need to understand the goals and objectives of the national program and the initiative described in this program announcement and show how their proposed projects would contribute to achieving those goals and objectives. Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the multiple needs of children and adolescents who have a terminally ill parent or who have lost a parent(s) to AIDS or who themselves may be HIV positive.

If applicable, applicants should provide letters of commitment or Memoranda of Understanding from organizations, agencies, and consultants that will be partners or collaborators in the proposed project. These documents should describe the role of the agency, organization, or consultant and detail specific tasks to be performed.

This criterion consists of three broad topics that should be addressed in the application:

- (1) program goals and objectives; (2) review of the literature and conceptual framework; and (3) significance to researchers, academicians, practitioners, and policy makers in the area of HIV/AIDS and child welfare.

Program Goals and Objectives (7 Points)

Applicants should describe characteristics of the target population, including the distribution according to age, race, and ethnicity; and how the participants are affected by HIV/AIDS. The description should include key socioeconomic and demographic information on the target population and the anticipated number of participants to be served by the proposed program.

Applicants are expected to present a vision of the camp and recreational or camp activities they anticipate developing and compare them to existing services. They should present a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the proposed project and discuss contextual factors that will facilitate or impede the implementation of their project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant clearly states the goals and objectives for the program and indicates how they are related to the needs of children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, demonstrating that there is a need for the program (1 Point);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes and documents the characteristics and needs of the target population, the geographic location to be served, and the status of existing services and/or programs serving children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear and concise vision of recreational or camp activities for the target population that are logically linked to the goals and objectives (2 Points); and

- (4) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes the benefits for the children served, the anticipated number of participants, and the basis for these estimates (2 Points).

Supporting Evidence and Conceptual Framework (10 Points)

Applicants are required to present a review of information (supporting evidence) that reflects an understanding of the research and/or best practices pertaining to working with children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a concise review of supporting evidence from similar efforts (e.g., camps for children with cancer) and best practices regarding promoting optimal development for children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an awareness of current initiatives in working with children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and how the approach for the proposed project will build or differ from these initiatives (2 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the problems and issues involved in providing support services for children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, particularly the emotional and psychological issues (1 Point); and
- (4) Extent to which the applicant provides a cohesive conceptual framework that is evidence-based (supported by theory, research, evaluation data, and best practices), structures the proposed recreational or camp activities, and explains the linkages between and among proposed recreational or camp and other activities and outcomes (4 Points).

Significance (8 Points)

Applicants should explain how the proposed recreational or camp activities are innovative and will contribute to increased knowledge of the problem, issues, and effective strategies and practices for working with and providing social support for children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. This section should include an overview of: (1) how the proposed project will produce results that will benefit the participants and be useful to agencies addressing the same or similar problems; (2) a method of documentation of project components and strategies such that the successful elements of the approach may be replicated in other settings; and (3) project products and a plan for dissemination of the materials and findings.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project, if successfully implemented and evaluated, is likely to yield findings or results that will contribute to and promote evidence-based practices that will be useful to other agencies and organizations in developing services and programs to address the issues, as well as benefit national policy and practice, and identify issues for additional research in the field (4 Points);

- (2) Extent to which the proposed project or strategies can be replicated by other agencies addressing the same or similar problems and, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in other settings (2 Points); and
- (3) Extent to which the findings, results, and materials (such as information, materials, processes, or techniques) will be packaged and disseminated in ways that will enable others to use the information and strategies to implement evidence-based practice improvement (2 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (48 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a plan that: (1) reflects an understanding of the characteristics, needs, and services currently available to the target population; (2) provides services that directly address the needs of the target population; (3) is grounded in theory and practice; (4) is appropriate and feasible; (5) can be reliably evaluated; and, (6) if successfully implemented, can be sustained after Federal funding has ceased.

This criterion consists of four topics: (1) program design; (2) project services; (3) evaluation; and (4) product development and dissemination.

Program Design (18 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to define goals and specific, measurable objectives for the program. Goals and objectives should not be confused. Goals are an end product of an effective program. Objectives are measurable steps for reaching goals.

Applicants are required to describe an appropriate, feasible plan of action pertaining to the scope of the program and provide details on how the proposed program will be accomplished. If the program involves partnerships with other agencies and organizations, then the roles of each partner should be clearly specified.

Applicants are expected to present a program design that includes detailed procedures for documenting project activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support a methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation. Applicants must describe how and what data will be collected on children; types of activities and/or services provided; and the types and nature of needs identified and met.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which goals, objectives and outcomes are clearly specified and measurable, as well as based on an understanding of the characteristics of the participants and the context of the intervention (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the design of the proposed program is evidence based and reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices related to children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS (3 Points);

- (3) Extent to which the design and approach is feasible and appropriate to address the needs of the target population (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed design includes procedures for documenting program activities and results, including the development of a data collection infrastructure that is sufficient to support methodologically sound and rigorous evaluation (3 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the proposed project will establish and coordinate linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations on the local, State or Federal level serving the target population (2 Points); and
- (6) Extent to which the proposed project is designed to build local capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance (2 Points).

Project Services (20 Points)

Applicants must provide a detailed description of the services and recreational or camp activities to be provided by the camp program, explaining how these services and activities will bridge gaps in the current service delivery system and lead to positive outcomes for children and adolescents.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed program is based on supporting evidence and will build on current theory, research, evaluation data, and best practices to contribute to increased knowledge or understanding of the problem, issues, or effective strategies and practices in the field (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed program is innovative and involves the demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the proposed services and activities are comprehensive in scope and will provide a wide range of social support, services, and assistance needed by children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the services to be provided will be beneficial to the children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and their families (7 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the proposed services involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of service delivery (2 Points).

Evaluation (10 Points)

Applicants are required to describe how the proposed project will be evaluated to determine the extent to which it has achieved its stated goals and objectives. The evaluation design is expected to include process and outcome analyses with qualitative and quantitative components.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for assessing the effectiveness of project strategies and the implementation process, including the methods for selecting children and adolescents, recruiting and hiring staff, establishing daily programming goals, and securing additional funding (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of program progress and a basis for program adjustments (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the evaluation includes an assessment of barriers or obstacles to implementing the proposed project as well as strategies employed to address these barriers or obstacles (2 Points); and
- (4) Extent to which the evaluation plan is likely to yield findings or results about effective strategies, and contribute to and promote evaluation research and evidence-based practices that may be used to guide replication in other settings (2 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (17 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed program. Capacity includes: (1) experience with similar projects; (2) experience with children and adolescents, including those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership and other staff members; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining working relationships among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure, including the management information system, to carry out the project.

Applicants are required to provide a plan that describes the responsibilities and time commitments of each project staff member. Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates and accomplishments. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

This section should detail how the project will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled.

The application must include a list organizations and consultants who will work with the program along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation within 90 days of the notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly described in the management plan.

Applicants are also required to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable and realistic schedule of activities, target dates, accomplishments, and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, completion dates, grant management reports, and a final report. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff, as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project task (2 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the role and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel (including consultants) are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed program (3 Points).

Staff Qualifications (6 Points)

In this section, applicants must provide evidence that project staff have the requisite training, experience, and expertise to carry out the proposed project on time, within budget, and with a high degree of quality.

Brief resumes of current and proposed staff, as well as job descriptions, should be included. Resumes must indicate the position that the individual will fill, and each position description must specifically describe the job as it relates to the proposed project.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director, key project staff and consultants have the necessary technical skill, knowledge, and experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (4 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program services, data processing and analysis, evaluation, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (6 Points)

Applicants must describe their experience in providing needed support services to children and adolescents impacted by HIV/AIDS. Applicants should also describe their history and

relationship with the targeted community. Include a complete discussion of relevant program, administrative, and fiscal management experience.

If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each partnering organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant and partnering organizations collectively have experience in developing and implementing innovative programs or service-delivery systems with children and adolescents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data processing and analysis, evaluation, reporting, and dissemination of findings (3 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to allocate sufficient funds in the budget to provide for a key staff person from the project and the evaluator to attend an annual 3-day grantees' meeting in Washington, D.C. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Applicants under the priority area are advised to commit up to five percent of the total approved project costs for an evaluation of the project. For example, a grant award of \$100,000 with a match of \$11,111 per budget period should commit approximately \$5,500 annually to the evaluation effort.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and are programmatically justified in view of the activities to be conducted, anticipated results, and benefits (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement, and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 48 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of the grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: Grant amounts will vary from \$50,000 to \$100,000 per budget period for each of the 4 years. The dollar amount requested must be fully justified and documented.

MATCHING REQUIREMENT: Grantees must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost of the project is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. The non-Federal share may be met by cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. Therefore, a project requesting a total of \$400,000 in Federal funds for all four project years (based on an award of \$100,000 per budget period) must include a match of at least \$44,444 (10 percent of total approved project costs, i.e., \$11,111 per budget period). If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that three projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 50 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over that number will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.551

2001D. Building Analytical Capacity for Child Welfare Programs in the States

While all State child welfare agencies have the capacity to manage and report data, some States also have internal capacity (or external capacity, through contractual relationships) for data analysis research and/or evaluation; other States do not. It is becoming increasingly more important for States to develop or enhance their expertise in data analysis—to become participants in the “data revolution”—to support strategic change and program improvement. Enhanced State agency capacity for data analysis supports fact-based decisionmaking and outcome-based management, which in turn increases agency goal orientation and contributes to problem solving and goal setting. State agencies’ use of data analysis also facilitates child welfare program priority setting and increased agency staff teamwork and motivation, thus improving outcomes for children and families.

Nevertheless, enhancements to State data analysis capacity can present challenges for child welfare agencies. These initiatives require agency staff to define measures across operating divisions and specialty units, which in many instances have developed unique division- or unit-specific goals. Defining measures may result in more indicators than an agency has capacity for assessing/monitoring/analyzing; therefore, agency staff may need to engage in “measure-reduction.” High-quality data analysis calls for staff to collect and manage data in a timely manner, as well as ensure that data are complete—not missing important elements of the child welfare “picture.” State agency-administered data analysis must exist in a climate geared to the data revolution, in which staff recognize the value of data analysis; have data-literacy expertise, or are provided with professional development opportunities to gain such expertise; and have the computer hardware/software and other support to conduct analyses based on the data the agency collects. Finally, State agencies must identify the audiences for data analysis reports, including

legislators, administrators, supervisors, line staff, and the public—and provide reports appropriate for each audience.

The integration of State-based data analysis capacity with child welfare program decisionmaking has been tested using two approaches. One approach involves the establishment and operation of an analytical unit within a State agency, while the second approach is based on a contractual partnership between the State government and a private research and evaluation firm. The State of Washington, for example, represents the in-house approach. Washington's Office of Children's Administration Research is a component of the Children's Administration, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The Office produces new knowledge and information used for improving DSHS' policies and programs. Funded through a State budget and also financially supported by Federal grants, the Office conducts research and evaluation projects on the identification of child abuse and neglect, effective intervention strategies, youth's experience of transition from foster care to independence, and long-term effects of maltreatment on child development. These projects provide a foundation for analytically informed organizational and policy changes. The Office chief is included in the senior management team within DSHS and influences policy decisions through presentation of research findings and knowledge of best practice models. Focused on practical applications of research, the Office promotes the concept of data-based organizational change, integrating its analysis into child welfare policymaking and practice.

The second approach is represented by the contractual relationship between the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The School of Social Work houses the Office of the DCFS Research Director, which conducts child welfare research and policy analysis, including large-scale longitudinal studies of innovative child welfare interventions and funding arrangements. This Office also evaluates children and families in need and contributes to performance evaluation and welfare system reform. Office activities focus on improving the quality and accountability of child welfare policies and practices, to ensure the safety and well-being of Illinois children in permanent home environments. The Office supports DCFS decisionmaking by analyzing the relationship between policies and indicators of need with the policies' outcomes.

Applicants applying for funding under this priority area are expected to have an understanding of the uses of data analysis for fact-based decisionmaking and outcomes management. Applicants should demonstrate their agency's support for the use of data analysis to facilitate child welfare program priority setting and increased agency staff teamwork and motivation, geared toward improving outcomes for children and families.

Applicants should also demonstrate their willingness to establish and/or foster an organizational climate in which staff recognize the value of data analysis; have data-literacy expertise, or are provided with professional development opportunities to gain such expertise; and have the computer hardware/software and other support to conduct analyses based on the data the agency collects.

Applicants applying for funding under this priority area also are expected to have a thorough knowledge of various mandatory and voluntary data collection and reporting systems in the

fields of child protection and child welfare, including the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). Applicants are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the monitoring provisions of the Department of Health and Human Services' Final Rule (January 25, 2000) pertaining to Child and Family Services Reviews and the Title IV-E eligibility reviews. They should also demonstrate an understanding of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

AFCARS was established in 1994 to collect data on children in foster care and those adopted under the auspices of the State child welfare agencies. AFCARS data are used by the Children's Bureau for the purpose of program management, policy development, monitoring of State child welfare programs, short-term and long-term budget projections, and trend analyses for short-term and long-term planning. The AFCARS reports enable researchers and policymakers to compare populations of children entering and exiting foster care, as well as those waiting to be adopted and those actually adopted through the State agency.

NCANDS data are collected and reported on a State-by-State basis and published as *Child Maltreatment* annual reports. These reports include information on instances of child maltreatment reported and referred for investigation and assessment, child maltreatment victims, perpetrators of child abuse and/or neglect, child fatality estimates, and services provided for child maltreatment victims.

The Federal Government initiated SACWIS to assist States in developing both the hardware and software needed for a comprehensive child welfare case management system built on uniform and reliable data on children and families. SACWIS is intended to provide for more efficient and effective administration of all child welfare and foster care programs. SACWIS supports case assessment, financial management, and provides quality assurance reports. It also supports mandated licensing and legal activities. SACWIS helps to limit redundant data collection and reduce paperwork, increase the accuracy and availability of information, and improve tracking of case activities and their progress. To provide an opportunity to share experiences, maximize creativity and use modern information technologies to support child welfare activities, the States and Federal government participate in the SACWIS Peer Consultation Process.

Monitoring activities required by HHS's Child Welfare Final Rule (2000) and implemented through the Child and Family Services (CFS) Review and the Title IV-E eligibility review, track the child and family outcomes of State programs and address systemic factors that directly impact the State's capacity to deliver services, including: (1) statewide information systems; (2) the case review system; (3) quality assurance system; (4) staff and provider training; (5) service availability; (6) agency responsiveness to the community; and (7) foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment and retention.

2001D.1 Demonstration Sites: Building Analytical Capacity for Child Welfare Programs in State Systems

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Eligibility is limited to States that have not yet developed capacities for data analysis and interpretation to improve decisionmaking and accountability. Funds will be awarded for building an infrastructure for research and evaluation designed to increase efficiency and effectiveness of State child welfare programs.

PURPOSE: The funded States are expected to develop leadership skills in management and interpretation of data, demonstrate effective means of influencing policy decisions based on research results, disseminate strategies for better government programs in child welfare, and develop the capacity to analyze and interpret the data necessary to design and implement effective child welfare programs. In particular, the recipients of awards should demonstrate their ability to use the existing mandatory and voluntary data collection systems to meet national standards in planning and providing child protection and child welfare services.

Demonstration sites funded under this priority are expected to either establish an analysis unit in the State government or form a contractual partnership between the State government and a research and evaluation firm or university conforming to State procurement policies. As a requirement for funding, the proposed staff of analysts must have extensive expertise in strategic planning, measuring program performance against program goals, and data reporting pertaining to the States' accountability for its programs. The interdisciplinary analysis unit/organization must include professionals in either social work, public policy, economics, and other social science disciplines to enable the conduct of research on a broad range of child welfare issues and approaches. The grant awards will fund salaries and other expenses, including travel, for at least two full-time positions within an analysis unit or contractual relationship.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Federal Department of Health and Human Services has stipulated that monitoring of State child welfare programs should focus on results. Consequently, Annual Reports to Congress on the performance of each State in meeting the goals and objectives of the child welfare system must be based on a set of outcome measures. These measures include the following:

- Reduction in the recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect;
- Reduction in the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect of children in foster care;
- Increase in permanent placements of children in foster care, including placements due to children's reunification with parents and caretakers, adoption, or establishment of legal guardianship;
- Reduction in the length of stay in foster care due to reunification and adoption;
- Reduction in recurrent placements of children in different settings; and
- Reduction in placements of young children in group homes or institutions.

In addition to outcome evaluations, States applying for funding under this priority area are encouraged to propose the use of a variety of analytical techniques, including process evaluation and cost-benefit analysis to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of their child protection and child welfare programs. For example, process measures may include the data-based examination of policies and procedures; expertise of staff designing and implementing child welfare programs; client flow, as well as types, duration and combination of the services provided; relationships between child welfare agencies and courts; and methods for evaluating program results. Cost-benefit analysis would enable agencies to compare costs associated with child welfare programs and their outcomes to determine overall program performance.

States funded under this priority area will be matched by the Children's Bureau with a mentor site (a State that has already developed capacities, in-house or contractually, for data analysis and interpretation). Funds will be awarded directly to the mentor sites, under a separate priority area, for data consulting and technical assistance to promote increased efficiency and effectiveness of child welfare programs in States funded under this priority area. Mentor sites will assist recipient (mentee) States in introducing the state-of-the-art data analysis and best practices in reporting research findings. This information transfer should allow recipients to improve the design and implementation of child welfare programs. Mentoring should also assist recipient States in using existing mandatory and voluntary data collection systems to meet national standards in planning and providing child protection and child welfare services.

NOTE: Funds available under this priority may not be used to purchase computer hardware or software. Also, the applicant may not use these funds to pay for existing positions or activities currently funded using Federal or State money.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application under this priority area. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (45 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to provide a clear and comprehensive description of their agency's current capacity to collect, analyze and report data to various levels of government. This description should include data collection, analysis and reporting required by the State and Federal government, as well as reports designed for the legislature and other constituencies. Applicants are encouraged to provide a description of the internal and external information needs of the agency, constituencies for information, and the types of data required or requested by these agencies, organizations or groups.

Applicants are expected to explain the current structure, management, and process for collecting, analyzing and reporting data. This description should include a consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the current operating system and analytic component.

In addition, applicants should describe the research and evaluation that would be conducted by the proposed analysis unit. Applicants are encouraged to identify specific research questions to

be addressed by the unit and explain how the agency's data systems would be used to answer these questions.

Specific Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the goals and objectives of the proposed analysis unit or contractual relationship are explained clearly and are appropriate to this priority area (3 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the applicant describes current methods and systems used by the agency to compile data required by the State and the Federal government (including data sources, inputs, and reports) and describes the strengths and weaknesses of this system (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant provides a description of the internal and external information needs of the agency, constituencies for information, and the types of data required or requested by these agencies, organizations or groups, and explains how the proposed analysis unit or contractual relationship would assist the agency in meeting internal and external information needs and goals (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the concept of promoting agency accountability through management by objectives, outcome-based management, and/or other performance-based management systems (4 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the formation of the analysis unit or contractual relationship will improve the applicant's capacity to implement or enhance internal and/or external performance-based management systems (4 Points);
- (6) Extent to which the applicant explains fully how the proposed analysis unit or contractual relationship will increase the capacity of the agency to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of current child protection and child welfare programs, and measure outcomes for children; inform policy; and improve the quality of services (8 Points);
- (7) Extent to which the applicant presents realistic examples of the research questions to be addressed and the types of studies to be conducted (4 Points);
- (8) Extent to which the applicant explains how the proposed research, evaluations and studies would contribute to the development of knowledge about the dynamics of child maltreatment, improve field practices, and assist in the design of interventions, treatment and support services for children in the child welfare system and their parents or caregivers (5 Points);
- (9) Extent to which the applicant describes the types of products that will be produced and how these products will address the information needs of various constituencies (3 Points);
- (10) Extent to which the applicant clearly describes the benefits that the State, counties, and other constituencies will derive from the reports and other products produced (3 Points); and

- (11) Extent to which the applicant presents a clear vision of the data analysis routines and procedures to be developed, including a discussion of the contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the functioning of the analysis unit or contractual relationship (4 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (30 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to describe in detail how they will implement the proposed analysis activity. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate an understanding of the operations of analysis units pertaining to child protection and child welfare systems in other jurisdictions. Applicants should describe in detail why they have selected one approach over the other.

Specific Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents an informed assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of an in-house analysis unit versus a contractual partner (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the justification for selecting the proposed approach is explained in detail, including a description of how the chosen approach will mesh with current information demands, operations and procedures, management structure, staffing and other resources (5 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the selected approach and implementation plan are appropriate and feasible and will build an analytic capacity for the agency (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the implementation plan describes how the analysis activity will be established, managed, operated and evaluated (4 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the proposed implementation plan describes the function and scope of the activities of the analysis unit and presents a feasible method for identifying research, evaluation, and analysis priorities, and determining what studies to be conducted (5 Points);
- (6) Extent to which the implementation plan presents a feasible and appropriate method for identifying the information needs of various audiences (constituencies) and disseminating information to these groups (4 Points); and
- (7) Extent to which the implementation plan provides an appropriate and feasible method for institutionalizing and sustaining the analytic capacity after Federal funding has ceased (4 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the proposed project. Capacity includes: (1) experience with data collection, analysis and reporting projects pertaining to child welfare issues (2) experience with the target population; (3) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (4) commitment to developing and sustaining work among key stakeholders; (5) experience and commitment of any proposed consultants and subcontractors; and (6) appropriateness of the organizational structure to carry out the project.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a sound and feasible management plan for implementing the analysis activity. This section should detail how it will be structured and managed, how the timeliness of activities will be ensured, how quality control will be maintained, and how costs will be controlled. The role and responsibilities of the lead agency should be clearly defined and, if appropriate, applicants should discuss the management and coordination of activities carried out by any partners and subcontractors.

Applicants are expected to have the project fully staffed and ready for implementation as quickly as possible after notification of the grant award. Therefore, strategies for ensuring timely staffing and implementation should be clearly and succinctly presented in the management plan. The narrative should include a description of the timeline for hiring and procurement in the State, and methods that the applicant will use to expedite the process.

Applicants are also expected to produce a timeline that presents a reasonable schedule of target dates, accomplishments and deliverables. The timeline should include the sequence and timing of the major tasks and subtasks, important milestones, reports, and completion dates. The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties. Additionally, if appropriate, applicants should present a plan for training project staff, as well as staff of cooperating organizations.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency are clearly defined, and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project (2 Points).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

In this section, applicants should describe the qualifications of the analysts who will be hired to staff the analysis activity and the positions they will fill. Applicants are also expected to describe the educational background and professional experience of other professionals who will form the interdisciplinary analysis unit or organization. (Brief resumes should be provided.) The proposed staff should include persons with educational backgrounds and professional experiences in social work, public policy, economics and other social science disciplines such that the analysis unit or organization will be able to conduct research on a broad range of child welfare issues and approaches.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director, key project staff (including analysts to be hired), and consultants have the necessary technical skill, knowledge and experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data collection and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to form, manage, operate, evaluate and sustain an analysis activity, including the capacity to resolve a wide variety of technical and management problems that may occur. If the application involves partnering and/or subcontracting with other agencies/ organizations, then the application should include an organizational capability statement for each participating organization documenting the ability of the partners and/or subcontractors to carry out their assigned roles and functions.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant organization and partnering organizations collectively have experience and resources required to form, manage, operate and sustain an analysis unit; (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration, program operations, data processing and analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs, appropriately allocated across component areas, and sufficient to accomplish the objectives.

The proposed budget should include sufficient funding to cover travel expenses for two key staff persons from the project to attend an annual 3-day grantees' meeting in the Washington, D.C., area hosted by the Children's Bureau. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results and benefits (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 36 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of each grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$250,000 per budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: The grantee must provide at least 10 percent of the total approved cost of the project. The total approved cost is the sum of the Federal share and the non-Federal share. Therefore, a project requesting \$250,000 per budget period must include a match of at least \$27,778 per budget period. The non-Federal share may be cash or in-kind contributions, although applicants are encouraged to meet their match requirements through cash contributions. If approved for funding, grantees will be held accountable for the commitment of non-Federal resources and failure to provide the required amount will result in a disallowance of unmatched Federal funds.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 70 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.556

2001D.2 Mentor Sites: Building Analytical Capacity for Child Welfare Programs in State Systems

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Eligibility is limited to the States that have already developed capacities, in-house or contractually, for data analysis and interpretation and can serve as mentors for other States that seek to improve data analysis through advanced research and evaluation. Funds will be awarded to the mentor sites for consulting and technical assistance to promote increased efficiency and effectiveness of child welfare programs in States that have not yet developed capacities for advanced data analysis and interpretation.

PURPOSE: To promote a transfer of expertise in using data in child protection and child welfare program improvement from States with superior analytical capacity to States seeking to improve their research and evaluation infrastructure. The mentor sites are expected to possess leadership skills in management and interpretation of data and demonstrate effective methods for conducting studies that are relevant to policy and field practice. Mentor sites will assist recipient (mentee) States in introducing state-of-the-art data analysis and best practices in reporting research findings. This information transfer should allow recipients to improve the design and implementation of child welfare programs. Mentoring should also assist recipient States in using

existing mandatory and voluntary data collection systems to meet national standards in planning and providing child protection and child welfare services.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Mentor sites funded under this priority are expected to be an analysis unit of the State government, or engaged in a contractual partnership between the State government and a private research and evaluation firm. Mentors will be matched by the Children's Bureau with the States seeking help in their development of analytical capacity in the area of child protection and child welfare. The proposed staff of the mentor sites should include analysts with extensive expertise in strategic planning, program performance measurement, and data reporting pertaining to State accountability. States applying for a grant must include staff with educational backgrounds and professional experience in social work, public policy, economics and other social science disciplines qualified to conduct research on the broad range of the child welfare issues and approaches. The grant awards will compensate mentors for their consulting, technical assistance and other services, including travel to on-site meetings with mentees. Information sharing through electronic communications is strongly encouraged. The awards also will allow mentor sites to hire part-time substitutes for their specialists involved in consulting with other States. It is expected that mentors will dedicate 2 days per month to working at the mentee sites.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The following four criteria will be used to review and evaluate each application under this priority area. The applicant should address each criterion in the project application. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review process.

CRITERION 1: OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE (50 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to describe the following: the organization and function of their analysis activity; their perception of the role and responsibilities of a mentor site; why they wish to be selected as a mentor site; and the types of skills, knowledge, insights and technologies they would share with a mentee site.

Applicants are expected to provide a clear and comprehensive description of the current capacity of their analysis unit (whether in-house or contractual) to collect, analyze and report data to various levels of government. This description should include data collection, analysis and reporting required by the State and Federal government, as well as reports designed for the legislature and other constituencies.

Applicants are expected to explain the current structure, management, and process for collecting, analyzing and reporting data, and include a description of the research and evaluation capacities of the analysis unit. Applicants are encouraged to identify specific research and evaluation studies that the analysis unit has or is currently conducting, including special reports.

Specific Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the goals and objectives of the mentoring initiative, including the role and responsibilities of mentor sites (5 Points);

- (2) Extent to which the applicant describes current methods and systems used by the agency to compile data required by the State and the Federal government (including data sources, inputs, and reports) and describes the strengths and weaknesses of these systems (3 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant provides a description of the internal and external information needs of the agency, constituencies for information, and the types of data required or requested by these agencies, organizations or groups, and explains how the analysis activity has assisted the agency in meeting internal and external information needs and goals (4 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates an understanding of the concept of promoting agency accountability through management by objectives, outcome-based management, and/or other performance-based management systems (4 Points);
- (5) Extent to which the operations of the analysis activity has improved the applicant's capacity to implement or enhance internal and/or external performance-based management systems (4 Points);
- (6) Extent to which the applicant explains fully how the analysis activity has increased the capacity of the agency to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of child protection and child welfare programs, measure outcomes for children; inform policy; and/or, improve the quality of services (8 Points);
- (7) Extent to which the applicant explains how the research, evaluations and other studies conducted by the analysis unit have contributed to the development of knowledge about the dynamics of child maltreatment, improved field practices, and/or assisted in the design of interventions, treatment and support services for neglected and abused children and their parents or caregivers (5 Points);
- (8) Extent to which the applicant describes the types of products produced by the analysis unit and how these products addressed the information needs of various constituencies (3 Points);
- (9) Extent to which the applicant describes the skills, knowledge, insights and technologies they would share with a mentee site (10 Points); and
- (10) Extent to which the applicant presents a clear vision of the proposed mentoring program and describes the contextual factors that will facilitate or hinder the implementation the mentoring initiative (4 Points).

CRITERION 2: APPROACH (25 Points)

In this section, applicants are expected to describe in detail how they will implement the proposed activity. Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate an understanding of the operations of analysis units pertaining to child protection and child welfare systems in other jurisdictions.

Specific Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the applicant presents a feasible and appropriate plan for assisting mentee sites in assessing their assistance needs (4 Points);
- (2) Extent to which the proposed mentoring plan will provide for a broad and appropriate range of technical assistance on a variety of topics (6 Points);
- (3) Extent to which the applicant presents a feasible and appropriate plan for providing technical assistance to mentee sites (8 Points);
- (4) Extent to which the proposed approach will build an analytic capacity at mentee sites (4 Points); and
- (5) Extent to which the applicant presents a feasible and appropriate plan for using electronic communications to maintain contact with mentee sites, convey information and provide technical assistance (3 Points).

CRITERION 3: ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES (15 Points)

Applicants need to demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement the mentoring initiative. Capacity includes: (1) experience with data collection, analysis and reporting projects pertaining to child welfare issues (2) qualifications and experience of the project leadership; (3) commitment to developing and sustaining work among key stakeholders; (4) experience and commitment of any proposed consultants and subcontractors; and (5) appropriateness of the organizational structure to carry out the mentoring initiative.

This criterion consists of three broad topics: (1) management plan, (2) staff qualifications and commitment, and (3) organizational capacity and resources.

Management Plan (5 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a sound and feasible management plan for providing mentoring services to selected sites. If the proposed plan involves employing part-time substitutes for the analytic specialists who will be providing the technical assistance to mentees, then this arrangement should be described in the narrative.

The application should also discuss factors that may affect project implementation or the outcomes and present realistic strategies for the resolution of these difficulties.

Specific Review Criteria:

- (1) Extent to which the management plan presents a realistic approach to achieving the objectives of the mentoring project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities and milestones for accomplishing project tasks (3 Points); and

- (2) Extent to which the roles and responsibilities of the proposed analytic specialists and the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the mentoring initiative (2 Points).

Staff Qualifications (5 Points)

In this section, applicants should describe the qualifications of the proposed staff who will provide mentoring services. Applicants are also expected to describe the educational background and professional experience of other professionals that comprise the applicant's interdisciplinary analysis unit or organization. The proposed staff should include persons with educational backgrounds and professional experiences in social work, public policy, economics and other social science disciplines that have substantial experience working in an analysis unit and who will be able to provide technical assistance to others in conducting research on a broad range of child welfare issues and approaches. Brief resumes of the proposed mentoring staff should be provided.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the proposed project director and key project staff have the necessary technical skill, knowledge and experience to successfully carry out their responsibilities (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which staffing is adequate for the proposed project, including administration and program operations (2 Points).

Organizational Capacity and Resources (5 Points)

Applicants must show that they have the organizational capacity and resources to assist mentee sites in forming, managing, operating, evaluating and sustaining an analysis unit.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the applicant organization has experience and resources required to provide mentoring services (3 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the applicant has adequate organizational resources for the proposed project, including administration and program operations (2 Points).

CRITERION 4: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION (10 Points)

Applicants are expected to present a budget with reasonable project costs, appropriately allocated across component areas, and sufficient to accomplish the objectives. They should demonstrate that costs for the proposed project are reasonable and justified in terms of the proposed tasks and the anticipated results and benefits. Applicants should refer to the budget information as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A and the budget justification.

The proposed budget should include sufficient funding to cover travel expenses for a key person from the project to attend an annual 3-day grantees meeting in the Washington, D.C., area hosted by the Children's Bureau. Attendance at this conference is a grant requirement.

Specific Review Criteria :

- (1) Extent to which the costs of the proposed program are reasonable, as presented on Standard Forms 424 and 424A, and justified in view of the activities to be conducted and the anticipated results and benefits (7 Points); and
- (2) Extent to which the fiscal control and accounting procedures are adequate to ensure prudent use, proper and timely disbursement and accurate accounting of funds received under this program announcement (3 Points).

PROJECT DURATION: The projects will be awarded for a project period of 36 months. The initial grant award will be for a 12-month budget period. The award of continuation funding beyond each 12-month budget period will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress on the part of each grantee, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the government.

FEDERAL SHARE OF PROJECT COSTS: The maximum Federal share of the project is \$150,000 per budget period.

MATCHING OR COST SHARING REQUIREMENT: There is not matching requirement.

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED: It is anticipated that four projects will be funded.

LENGTH OF APPLICATION: The length of the application is limited to 50 pages, including all forms and attachments. Any pages over this limit will be removed and will not be reviewed.

CFDA NUMBER: 93.556

PART III. The Application: Instructions, Review, and Funding Process

A. Application Format

To be considered for funding, each application must be submitted with the forms provided at the end of this announcement and in accordance with the guidance provided. The application must be signed by an individual authorized to act for the applicant agency and to assume responsibility for the obligations imposed by the terms and conditions of the grant award.

To be considered for funding, each applicant must submit one signed original and two additional copies of the application, including all forms and attachments, to the Application Receipt Point specified above. The original copy of the application must have original signatures, signed in black ink.

The application must be typed, double spaced, printed on only one side, with at least 1/2 inch margins on each side and 1 inch at the top and bottom, using standard 12 Point fonts (such as Times Roman or Courier). Pages must be numbered and each copy must be stapled securely in the upper left corner.

Pages over the page limit stated with each priority area will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed.

All copies of an application must be submitted in a single package, and a separate package must be submitted for each priority area. The package must be clearly labeled for the specific priority area it is addressing.

Because each application will be duplicated, do not use or include separate covers, binders, clips, tabs, plastic inserts, maps, brochures, or any other items that cannot be processed easily on a photocopy machine with an automatic feed. Do not bind, clip, staple, or fasten in any way separate subsections of the application, including supporting documentation. Applicants are advised that the copies of the application submitted, not the original, will be reproduced by the Federal government for review.

B. Application Content

Each application must contain the following items in the order listed:

1. Application for Federal Assistance (Standard Form 424). Follow the instructions below and those that accompany the form.

In Item 5 of Form 424, include name, phone number, and, if available, email and fax numbers of the contact person.

In Item 8 of Form 424, check 'New.'

In Item 10 of Form 424, clearly identify the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance* (CFDA) program title and number for the program for which funds are being requested as stated at the end of each priority area section. (Adoption Opportunities Grants, 93.652; Promoting Safe

and Stable Families Program, 93.556; Child Welfare Training Programs, 93.648; Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, 93.670; Abandoned Infants, 93.551)

In Item 11 of Form 424, identify the single Priority Area the application addresses.

In Item 12 of Form 424, identify the specific geographic area to be served.

In Item 14 of Form 424, identify Congressional districts of both the applicant and project.

2. Budget Information Non-Construction Programs (Form 424A) and Budget Justification. Follow the instructions provided and those in the Uniform Project Description. Note that Federal funds provided to States and services or other resources purchased with Federal funds may not be used to match project grants.
3. Certifications/Assurances. Applicants requesting financial assistance for nonconstruction projects must file the Standard Form 424B, 'Assurances: Non-Construction Programs.' Applicants must sign and return the Standard Form 424B with their applications. Applicants must provide a certification regarding lobbying when applying for an award in excess of \$100,000. Applicants must sign and return the certification with their applications.

Applicants must disclose lobbying activities on the Standard Form LLL when applying for an award in excess of \$100,000. Applicants who have used non-Federal funds for lobbying activities in connection with receiving assistance under this announcement shall complete a disclosure form to report lobbying. Applicants must sign and return the disclosure form, if applicable, with their applications.

Applicants must make the appropriate certification of their compliance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988. By signing and submitting the application, the applicant is providing the certification and need not mail back the certification with the applications.

Applicants must make the appropriate certification that they are not presently debarred, suspended or otherwise ineligible for an award. By signing and submitting the application, the applicant is providing the certification need not mail back the certification with the applications.

If applicable, applicants must include a completed Form 310, Protection of Human Subjects.

If applicable, applicants must include a completed SPOC certification (Single Point of Contact) with the date of the SPOC contact entered in line 16, page 1 of the Form 424.

By signing the "Signature of Authorized Representative" on the SF 424, the applicant is providing a certification and need not mail assurances for completing the following grant and cooperative agreement requirements:

- a. collection of data on individuals served; types of services provided; types and nature of needs identified and met and any other such information as may be required by ACYF;

- b. compliance with all HHS regulations and procedures pertaining to confidentiality and careful handling of information on individuals, families and evaluation data; and, obtaining informed consent;
- c. participation in any evaluation effort supported by ACYF;
- d. submission of all required reports in a timely manner, in recommended formats (to be provided), and that the final report will also be submitted on disk or electronically using a standard word-processing program; and,
- e. attendance of a key staff person from the project at an annual 3-day grantees' meeting in Washington, D.C.

The Office for Human Research Protections of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides website information and policy guidance on the Federal regulations pertaining to protection of human subjects (45 CFR 46), informed consent, informed consent checklists, confidentiality of personal identification information, data collection procedures, and internal review boards: <http://ohrp.osophs.dhhs.gov/polasur.htm>.

4. Project Abstract/Summary (one page maximum). Clearly mark this page with the applicant name as shown on item 5 of the Form 424, identify the competitive grant Priority Area and the title of the proposed project as shown in item 11 and the service area as shown in item 12 of the Form 424. The summary description should not exceed 300 words.

Care should be taken to produce an abstract/summary that accurately and concisely reflects the proposed project. It should describe the objectives of the project, the approach to be used and the results or benefits expected.

5. Project Description. Applicants should organize their project description by the evaluation criteria listed in Part II under each priority area description and provide specific information that addresses all the components of each evaluation criterion.

Applicants should be mindful of the importance of preparing and submitting applications that are responsive to the priority area description and that use language, terms, concepts and descriptions that are generally known to and accepted by the field of child welfare. Refer to the Uniform Project Description in Part IV for general guidance on preparing a project description and budget justification.

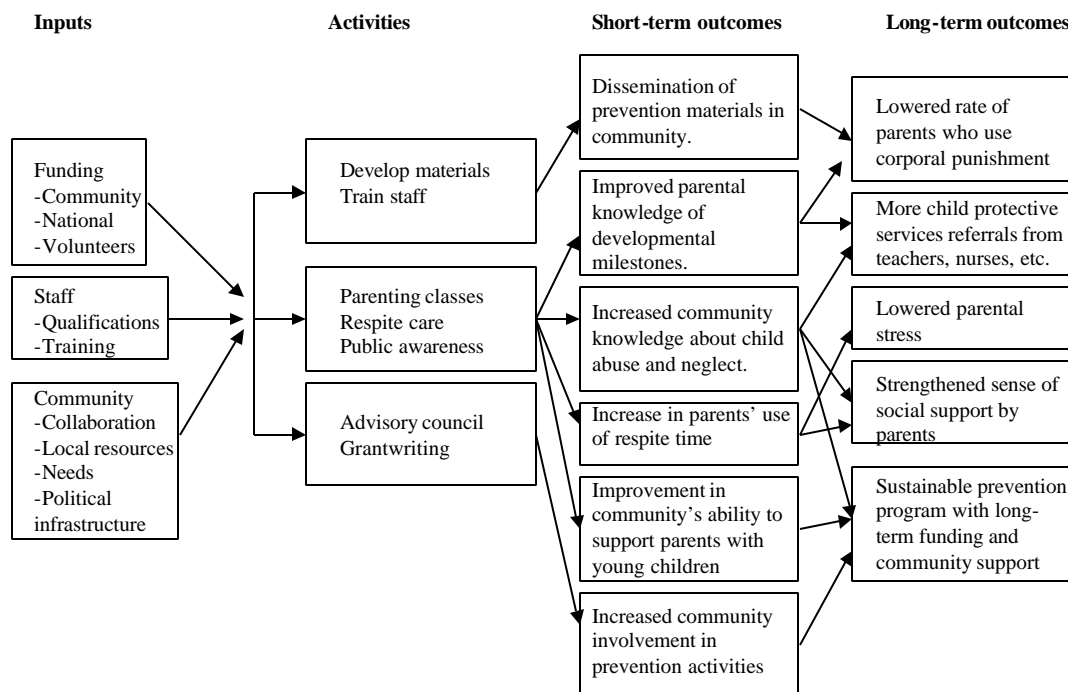
6. Logic Model. A logic model is a tool that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed program or project (including evaluation) and explains the linkages among program elements. It summarizes the logical connections between and among the problem/conditions/issues that are the focus of program/project/research/evaluation, goals and objectives, the target population, the proposed activities/services/interventions directed toward the target population, and the expected short- and long-term changes the initiative is designed to achieve. Program developers should work together with evaluators to develop the logic model so that the actual workings of the program are described and translated into evaluation terms.

Goals are the end product of an effective project. Objectives are measurable, time-based statements of intent linked directly to program goals and marking quantifiable interim steps for achieving those goals. Activities are the services a program delivers and the means to achieving desired outcomes. Outcomes are what the program hopes to achieve with each target group. They are the intended *results* of the program, not the *process* of achieving them. Short-term outcomes are the direct results of the program activities on its participants. They show a measurable change (often starting with “to increase” or “to decrease”) and should demonstrate why the program activities will lead to the long-term outcomes. Long-term outcomes are the ultimate goals of the program.

The logic model should also include output measures and outcome measures. Output measures are tools, or indicators, to count the services and goods produced by a program: the number of people receiving a service, number of services delivered, number of responses to an outreach, etc. Outcome measures are indicators of the actual impact or effect a program’s activities have on the problem or situation. A program’s progress is evaluated by comparing outcomes to objectives by means of measures. Outcome measures are expressed in a quantifiable form and indicate the degree to which the program is achieving its objectives, and should relate directly to the objectives and to the outcomes. There can be outcome measures for intermediary impacts as well as ultimate or final impacts.

A logic model can be illustrated as a set of activities or processes displayed in boxes and connected with arrows to results or outcomes. A sample logic model is shown in the exhibit below.

Exhibit: Sample Logic Model for a Child Abuse Prevention Demonstration Program



This exhibit shows a set of inputs that precede program implementation, including community need, existing services, staff qualifications, existing collaboration, funding sources and political infrastructure. Activities designed to address child abuse prevention include parenting classes, respite care, and a public awareness campaign. The short- and long-term outcomes are expressed in specific, objective and measurable terms.

Information on the development of logic models is available on the Internet at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/Evaluation/logicmodels.htm>, or http://www.extension.iastate.edu/cyfar/capbuilding/outcome/outcome_logicmdir.html

C. State Single Point of Contact (E.O. 12372)

Applicants should contact the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Federal Executive Order 12372 to determine whether the application is subject to the State intergovernmental review process. The OMB list of SPOCs is included in Part IV section B below and available online. Submit a copy of the SPOC response, if available, with your application. Adoption Opportunities program applicants are not required to submit their applications to SPOCs.

D. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-13)

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed and reviewing the collection information.

The project description is approved under OMB control number 0970-0139 which expires 12/31/2003.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

E. The Screening, Review and Funding Process

Before a panel review, each application will be screened for applicant organization eligibility as well as to make sure the application contains all essential elements. Applications received from ineligible organizations and applications that are received after the deadline will be withdrawn from further consideration. Applicants will be notified if their applications are screened out.

A panel of at least three reviewers (primarily experts from outside the Federal government) will use the evaluation criteria included in each priority area description to evaluate the applications. The reviewers will determine the strengths and weaknesses of each application, provide comments and assign numerical scores.

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated using four major criteria: (1) objectives and need for assistance, (2) approach, (3) organizational profiles, and (4) budget and budget justification. Each criterion has been assigned a point value that will vary from one priority area to another. The point values (summing up to 100) indicate the maximum numerical weight each criterion will be accorded in the review and evaluation process. Within each criterion there is a listing of the specific review criteria and the corresponding point values that will be used to calculate the

score for the criterion. For example, 50 points may be the maximum point value for the “approach” criterion. This criterion may be composed of 10 specific review criteria, each of which has a maximum value of 5 points. Applications will receive a score on each specific review criterion and these scores will be tallied to calculate the score for the approach criterion. The applicant should address each criterion and the specific review criteria in the project application.

The results of the competitive review are a primary factor in making funding decisions. In addition, Federal staff will conduct administrative reviews of the applications and, in light of the results of the competitive review, will recommend applications for funding to the ACYF Commissioner. ACYF reserves the option of discussing applications with other funding sources when this is in the best interest of the Federal government. ACYF may also solicit and consider comments from ACF Regional Office staff in making funding decisions.

The Commissioner, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, makes final decisions regarding the applications to be funded. Successful applicants will be notified through the issuance of a Financial Assistance Award which will set forth the amount of funds granted, the terms and conditions of the grant or cooperative agreement, the effective date of the grant, the budget period for which initial support will be given, the non-Federal share to be provided, if applicable, and the total project period for which support is contemplated.

The Commissioner will notify organizations in writing when their applications will not be funded. Every effort will be made to notify all unsuccessful applicants as soon as possible after final decisions are made.

Grants will be reviewed in late spring and summer. Grant awards will be made no later than September 30, 2001.

PART IV. Application Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

A. Project Description Overview

The following ACF Uniform Project Description has been approved under OMB Control Number 0970-0139. Applicants should prepare the project description statement in accordance with the following general instructions.

1. **PROJECT SUMMARY/ABSTRACT:** Provide a summary of the project description (one page or less) with reference to the funding request.
2. **OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR ASSISTANCE:** Clearly identify the physical, economic, social, financial, institutional, and/or other problem(s) requiring a solution. The need for assistance must be demonstrated and the principal and subordinate objectives of the project must be clearly stated; supporting documentation, such as letters of support and testimonials from concerned interests other than the applicant, may be included. Any relevant data based on planning studies should be included or referred to in the endnotes/footnotes. Incorporate demographic data and participant/beneficiary information, as needed. In developing the project description, the applicant may volunteer or be requested to provide information on the total range of projects currently being conducted and supported (or to be initiated), some of which may be outside the scope of the program announcement.
3. **APPROACH:** Outline a plan of action, which describes the scope, and detail of how the proposed work will be accomplished. Account for all functions or activities identified in the application. Cite factors, which might accelerate or decelerate the work and state your reason for taking the proposed approach rather than others. Describe any unusual features of the project such as design or technological innovations, reductions in cost or time, or extraordinary social and community involvement.

Provide quantitative monthly or quarterly projections of the accomplishments to be achieved for each function or activity in such terms as the number of people to be served and the number of program activities to be held, or appropriate measurable outcomes. When accomplishments cannot be quantified by activity or function, list them in chronological order to show the schedule of accomplishments and their target dates.

If any data are to be collected, maintained, and/or disseminated, clearance may be required from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). This clearance might be needed prior to any “collection of information that is conducted or sponsored by ACF.” List organizations, cooperating entities, consultants, or other key individuals whom will work on the project along with a short description of the nature of their effort or contribution.

4. **EVALUATION:** Provide a narrative addressing how the results of the project and the conduct of the project will be evaluated. In addressing the evaluation of results, state how you will determine the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives and the extent to which the accomplishment of objectives can be attributed to the project. Discuss the criteria to be used to evaluate results, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine if the needs identified and discussed are being met and if the project results and

benefits are being achieved. With respect to the conduct of the project, define the procedures to be employed to determine whether the project is being conducted in a manner consistent with the work plan presented and discuss the impact of the project's various activities on the project's effectiveness.

5. **ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILES:** Provide information on the applicant organization(s) and cooperating partners such as organizational charts, financial statements, audit reports or statements from CPAs/Licensed Public Accountants, Employer Identification Numbers, names of bond carriers, contact persons and telephone numbers, child care licenses and other documentation of professional accreditation, information on compliance with Federal/State/local government standards, documentation of experience in the program area, and other pertinent information. Any nonprofit organization submitting an application must submit proof of its nonprofit status in its application at the time of submission. The nonprofit agency can accomplish this by providing a copy of the applicant's listing in the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code, or by providing a copy of the currently valid IRS tax exemption certificate, or by providing a copy of the articles of incorporation bearing the seal of the State in which the corporation or association is domiciled.
6. **BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:** Provide line item detail and detailed calculations for each budget object class identified on the Budget Information form. Detailed calculations must include estimation methods, quantities, unit costs, and other similar quantitative detail sufficient for the calculation to be duplicated. The detailed budget must also include a breakout by the funding sources identified in Block 15 of the SF-424. Provide a narrative budget justification that describes how the categorical costs are derived. Discuss the necessity, reasonableness, and allocability of the proposed costs.

6a. **PERSONNEL**

Description: Costs of employee salaries and wages.

Justification: Identify the project director or principal investigator, if known. For each staff person, provide the title, time commitment to the project (in months), time commitment to the project (as a percentage or full-time equivalent), annual salary, grant salary, and wage rates. Do not include the costs of consultants or personnel costs of delegate agencies or of specific project(s) or businesses to be financed by the applicant.

6b. **FRINGE BENEFITS**

Description: Costs of employee fringe benefits unless treated as part of an approved indirect cost rate.

Justification: Provide a breakdown of the amounts and percentages that comprise fringe benefit costs such as health insurance, FICA, retirement insurance, and taxes.

6c. TRAVEL

Description: Costs of project-related travel by employees of the applicant organization (does not include costs of consultant travel).

Justification: For each trip, show the total number of traveler(s), travel destination, duration of trip, per diem, mileage allowances, if privately owned vehicles will be used, and other transportation costs and subsistence allowances. Travel costs for key staff to attend ACF-sponsored workshops should be detailed in the budget.

6d. EQUIPMENT

Description: "Equipment" means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of (a) the capitalization level established by the organization for the financial statement purposes, or (b) \$5,000. (Note: Acquisition cost means the net invoice unit price of an item of equipment, including the cost of any modifications, attachments, accessories, or auxiliary apparatus necessary to make it usable for the purpose for which it is acquired. Ancillary charges, such as taxes, duty, protective in-transit insurance, freight, and installation shall be included in or excluded from acquisition cost in accordance with the organization's regular written accounting practices.)

Justification: For each type of equipment requested, provide a description of the equipment, the cost per unit, the number of units, the total cost, and a plan for use on the project, as well as use or disposal of the equipment after the project ends. An applicant organization that uses its own definition for equipment should provide a copy of its policy or section of its policy which includes the equipment definition.

6e. OTHER

Enter the total of all other costs. Such costs, where applicable and appropriate, may include but are not limited to insurance, food, medical and dental costs (noncontractual), professional services costs, space and equipment rentals, printing and publication, computer use, training costs, such as tuition and stipends, staff development costs, and administrative costs.

Justification: Provide computations, a narrative description and a justification for each cost under this category.

6f. INDIRECT CHARGES

Description: Total amount of indirect costs. This category should be used only when the applicant currently has an indirect cost rate approved by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or another cognizant Federal agency.

Justification: An applicant that will charge indirect costs to the grant must enclose a copy of the current rate agreement. If the applicant organization is in the process of initially developing or renegotiating a rate, it should immediately upon notification that an award will be made, develop a tentative indirect cost rate application based on its most recently

completed fiscal year in accordance with the principles set forth in the cognizant agency's guidelines for establishing indirect cost rates, and submit it to the cognizant agency. Applicants awaiting approval of their indirect cost applications may also request indirect costs. It should be noted that when an indirect cost rate is requested, those costs included in the indirect cost pool should not also be charged as direct costs to the grant. Also, if the applicant is requesting a rate which is less than what is allowed under the program, the authorized representative of the applicant organization must submit a signed acknowledgement that the applicant is accepting a lower rate than allowed.

B. Other Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

Standard Form 424: Application for Federal Assistance

Standard Form 424A: Budget Information

Standard Form 424B: Assurances—Non-Construction Programs

Certification Regarding Debarment

Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace

Form LLL: Disclosure of Lobbying

Certification Regarding Environmental Tobacco Smoke

Standard Form 310: Protection of Human Subjects

State Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Listing (SPOC is not required for Adoption Opportunities applicants)

All forms are available online at: <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofs/grants/form.htm>.

The SPOC listing is available on line at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>.

Date: 4/25/01

/sig/ Gail E Collins

Gail E. Collins

Acting Deputy Commissioner

Administration on Children, Youth and Families